

The Road to Jannah Series

Ahlus - Sunnah Wal Jama'ah

The People of the Sunnah and the Jama'ah

Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad

الشيخ عمر بكرى محمد

Road to Jannah Series:

Ahl ul-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah

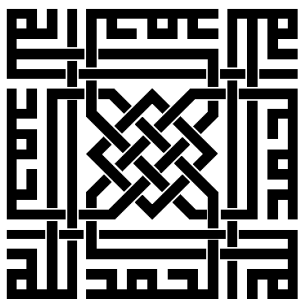
The People of the Sunnah and the Jama'ah

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*"O you who believe! fear Allah as He should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islaam. And hold fast, all together, to the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves; And remember with gratitude Allah's favour on you; For you were enemies and He joined your hearts in love, so that by His Grace, you became brothers; And you were on the brink of the pit of fire, and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah make His signs clear to you: that you may be guided."*¹

¹ Al-Qur'an, Surah ale-Imraan, 3: 102 - 103

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About the Author

Sheikh Omar bin Bakri bin Mohammad was born in 1958 into an orthodox and wealthy family in the ancient Islamic city of al-Halab (Aleppo) Syria. From the age of five he was enrolled into al-Kutaab Islamic Boarding Schools wherein he studied the Sciences of Qur'an, Hadith, Fiqh, Seerah and so forth. In his early adulthood, he continued his studies through Musahaba (companionship) with numerous noteworthy and respected Ulema of Ash-Shaam studying Usul al-Fiqh, Al-I'jaaz, Arabic Language, I'lm al-Khataba, I'lm al-Tassawuf, Fiqh and Ilm as-Seerah.

He then joined the Shari'ah Institute at Damascus University where he studied Fiqh and Shari'ah. Having completed his studies, obtaining a BA in Shari'ah and Usul al-Fiqh, he proceeded to Al-Azhar, Beirut where he began his studies in Shar'iah transferring to Al-Azhar, Cairo for completion. He obtained his MA in Fiqh ul-Madhaahib from the Imaam Uzaie University, Lebanon. In the early eighties, Sheikh Omar then moved to Saudi Arabia, where he joined the Madrassah Al-Saltiyyah studying and completing a Diploma in Jami' Al-Qur'an. During this time he also completed a thesis entitled, 'Nizaam al-Khilafah fil Islaam'.

Throughout his life, Sheikh Omar joined many Islamic movements including Muslim Students, Ebad ul Rahman, al-Ikhwan (al-Tali'ah section), and Hizb ut Tahrir. He established the Al-Muhajiroun Islamic movement in 1996, and continued as its Ameer until 2003. Currently he heads the Atibaa' Ahl us-Sunnah wal Jama'ah movement. As has been well publicised in the Arab Media, following a period of deep

research, studies and reflection Sheikh Omar changed his A'qeedah from ascribing to the deviant and innovated Maaturidi beliefs to that of the Sahabah and the Salafu Saalih, the A'qeedah of Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah.

He is the author of many books in Arabic and English, including:

Usul al Fiqh (The Foundation of Islamic Jurisprudence)

Ahkam al Salah (The rules of prayer)

Ahkam al Nikah (The rules of marriage and divorce)

Ahkam al Boyou' (The rules of transactions)

Khabar al Ahad (The book on single reports)

The duty of Jihad between Mind and Text

How to observe Ramadan

Why Islam declares war against Insurance

Political struggle in Islam

A nation without a cause is like a body without a soul

The way to Palestine

A quick reference to the Islamic economic system

Business and Company Structure in Islam

As-Sahabah the Islamic Standard

The Fruits of at-Tawheed

The Road to Jannah

In addition to being a speaker and khateeb in many mosques, he also has audio and visual tapes, including the commentary on the Qur'an. Sheikh Omar is currently the Principal lecturer at the London School of Shari'ah where he teaches Usul ad-Deen and ad-Deen according to the understanding of Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah.

Introduction

Indeed, all praise belongs to Allah (swt). We praise Him and we seek His Support and His Forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah (swt) from the evil of ourselves, and from the evil of our actions. Whomsoever Allah (swt) guides, none can misguide and whomsoever Allah (swt) misguides (and leaves to be misguided), none can guide. We testify that there is no one worthy of worship except Allah (swt) and we testify that the Messenger Muhammad (saw) is His (swt) last and final Messenger.

*“O you who believe! Fear Allah (swt) as He should be feared,
and die not except as Muslims.”²*

To proceed. Allah (swt) has said in the Holy Qur’an,

*“Indeed in the Messenger of Allah you have the best example
for him who looks to Allah and the last Day and remembers
Allah much.”³*

It is narrated on the authority of Tirmidhi that Abdullah ibn Amru reported that the Messenger Muhammad (saw) said,

² Al-Qur’an, Surah ale-Imraan, 3: 102

³ Al-Qur’an, Surah al-Ahzaab, 33: 21

*"My Ummah will face what Bani Israel faced step by step, even if one of them approached his mother publicly (sexually) there will be one of my Ummah who will approach his mother. The people of Israel divide into divided into 72 sects, my Ummah will divide into 73 sects, all of them will be in the hellfire, and one of them will be in paradise." We asked "Which one is saved?" The Prophet (saw) said, "The one that is with me and my Companions."*⁴

The above two evidences should be enough to make the servant of Allah (swt) shudder. The ayah in the Qur'an emphasises that the only way to attain *Jannah* (paradise) and eternal happiness is to follow the example of the Prophet (saw) and the path he (saw) and his Companions (ra) were upon. This matter is confirmed by the Muslim as part of his testification of faith in Islaam; *"I testify that there is no-one worthy of worship but Allah and I testify that Muhammad (saw) is His last and final Messenger"*; consequently, every Muslim claims to practice this.

However, the hadith related in Tirmidhi narrates a different reality. The Prophet (saw) explains how the Muslim ummah will divide into seventy-three different sects (*Firaq*) differing in matters of *A'qaid* (belief), and only one will be based upon the '*Aqeedah* (belief) which he (saw) and his companions were upon. Since only one of the sects would be correct, it thus follows that the majority (seventy-two) will be upon misguidance.

It becomes incumbent upon the Muslim, if he wishes to truly be sincere to Allah (swt), to investigate the '*Aqeedah* of the *firqat un-naajiah* (saved sect), their signs and attributes, and subsequently once they adopt this, they will be spared the Hell-Fire, whose abode is truly for the *khasireen* (failures).

⁴ Abdullah ibn Amru, Tirmidhi, Hadith No. 2565

It is not enough for the sincere followers of Allah (swt) to be led by the sayings of people who claim to be from *Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah*, or of the *Firqatu Naajiah* since many of the deviated ones claim these titles. But it is fitting for them to seek out and study that which the Prophet Muhammad (saw) said and brought, and what the Sahabah narrated and their comments upon these matters.

We pray to Allah (swt), that this short work explains some of the signs and attributes of the saved sect and that Allah (swt) allows us to gain the correct understanding of the Islaamic Aqeedah and makes us part of *Ahl ul Sunnah wal Jama'ah*, the *Firqah an-Najihah* (the saved sect). That He (swt) grants us the ability to perform all that He (swt) has obliged upon us and to abstain from all He has forbidden us and that with this, He (swt) returns to the Muslims the authority of the earth and makes us inheritors of Jannah in the Hereafter. Ameen.



CHAPTER 1

Names & Titles in Shari'ah

There are many in the Muslim ummah today who claim to be from *Ahl ul Sunnah wal Jama'ah* (the people of the sunnah and the group). Amongst those who claim this coveted title are the Sunnis, the Habashies⁵, the Shi'ahs and many more. If one were to study the simple differences between the sects we have just named, one could deduce quite quickly that both the Sunnis, and the Shi'ahs cannot be of *Ahl ul Sunnah wal Jama'ah* simultaneously, since the differences between these two sects are too great for reconcillation. Similar conclusions can be derived comparing the other sects and so forth. The question then arises, how do we know who is *Ahl ul Sunnah wal Jama'ah* and what do they stand for? Before we proceed and discuss this topic in more detail, it is vital for us to examine the *Hukm* (Islaamic verdict) with regards to choosing such titles for ourselves, since Allah (swt) says,

⁵ Habashies or Ahbaash, a group largely based in Lebanon so named after their leader, Sheikh Abdullah Al-Habashi (full name Abu Abdul Rahman, Abdullah bin Mohammad bin Yousef bin Abdullah Al Harary Al Shiby b. 1920), who hails from the city of Harare in Somalia. They are staunch Asharis in belief and claim to be of *Ahl-Sunnah*. In reality, they have deviated both in A'qeedah and fiqh from *Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah* making many false pronouncements. A complete exposition of this Cult and Sect is beyond the scope of this treatise.

“It is He who has named you Muslims, both before and in this (Revelation); that the Messenger may be a witness for you, and you be witnesses for mankind!”⁶

And it is reported upon the authority of Imaam al Harith al Ash’ari that the Messenger Muhammad (saw) has said,

“Call the Muslims by their own names, and by what Allah has called them; Muslims, Mu’mins, and ‘Ibad Allah”⁷

Names & Titles In Shari’ah

As Muslims who claim to believe in Allah (swt) and the Last Day, we know that we must follow all that the Messenger Muhammad (saw) has brought and all that he (saw) has forbidden. Since Allah (swt) has said,

“And whatsoever the Messenger brings take. And whatsoever He forbids you abstain and Fear Allah (swt).”⁸

We also are aware that we will be judged upon all of our actions since Allah (swt) has said,



“And by your Lord! He (swt) will call you to account all that you do.”⁹

⁶ Al-Qur’an Surah al-Hajj, 22: 78

⁷ Musnad Imaam Ahmad Vol 4, pg. 161

⁸ Al-Qur’an, Surah al-Hashr, 59: 7

From these ayat, a principal is derived in Usul ul-Fiqh that all actions require evidence. Consequently, attributing a name or title to ourselves thus also requires grounding in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Any innovated names or attributes must therefore be rejected¹⁰. Abdullah ibn Abbas (ra) is reported to have said,

"Whosoever innovates a name to call himself (by), removes the Deen (al-Islam) from his neck."

So the question may be posed, where does the title Ahl Sunnah wal Jama'ah derive from? It is reported that Abdullah ibn Abbas said regarding the verse, ***"On the Day of Judgement, some peoples faces will be bright, and others will be dark"***¹¹

*"Those whose faces will be bright will be Ahl us-Sunnah wal Jama'ah, and those whose faces will be dark will be Ahl Al Bid'ah wal Firqah."*¹²

Since the great *sahabi*¹³ Abdullah ibn Abbas and many of the 'Ulema of the Salaf¹⁴ used this title, we now have established the evidence for

⁹ Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Hijr, 15: 92-93

¹⁰ We have many examples from the Salaf regarding the issue of taking names. It is recorded in Kitaab ul-Intiqah that once, a man came to Imaam Malik bin Anas (ra) and said, "I am going to ask you about a mas'alah (subject); I will make the answer as a shield," Imaam Malik said, "Masha' Allah, Laa Quwata Illa Billah! Ask!" He said, "Who are the people of Ahl us-Sunnah?" Imaam Malik replied, "Ahl Al-Sunnah are those who are not known by any nicknames, neither Jahmie (those who separated Imaan from actions), nor Qadaris (who say that man creates his own actions), nor the Rafidis (Shi'ahs)." It is also recorded in Al-Durr Al-Manthour of Imaam As-Suyouti, Vol 2 p.63, that Imaam Maalik bin Maghoul (d.159h) said, "If somebody calls himself something anything other than Islaam or Al-Sunnah, call him by whatever Deen you wish."

¹¹ Al-Qur'an, Surah ale-Imraan, 3: 106

¹² Found in Tafseer Tabari and Ibn Kathir relating to the above ayah

¹³ Sahabi (pl. Sahabah) – derived from the root to accompany. Refers to those people who saw Muhammad (saw) and became Muslim and died upon the emaan (belief) of Islaam.

using this term Ahl ul Sunnah wal-Jama'ah. However, what does it actually refer to?

Ahl ul Sunnah wal-Jama'ah is not a Deen

Allah (swt) says in the Holy Qur'an,

“Indeed the only Deen (way of life) acceptable to Allah (swt) is Islaam.”¹⁵

Allah (swt) also says in the Qur'an,

“And to you be your Deen and to me be mine (Deen).”¹⁶

The above two ayats highlight the use of the word Deen, which means religion or way of life. In the first example we see that the only Deen acceptable to Allah (swt) is that of Islaam. Therefore, following any other *adyaan* (religions) such as Judaism, Christianity, Paganism, Buddhism etc. will be rejected and all actions based upon these fruitless. A Deen therefore can be defined as a system or way of life that people attribute to Allah (swt).

Imaam Uza'i said about the sahabah, *“Five things the Sahabah had (unlike others); staying under the Jama'ah (under Amir ul-Mu'mineen), following the Sunnah, commanding good and forbidding evil, fighting Jihad for the sake of Allah, and maintaining the brotherhood.”*

¹⁴ Imaam an-Nawawi said, *“This taa'ifah as reported in Bukhari that they are Ahl Al Ilm, and Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah.”*

¹⁵ Al-Qur'an, Surah ale-Imraan, 3: 19

¹⁶ Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Kaafiroun, 109: 6

Ahl ul-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah is not a Millah

Allah (swt) said,

“And strive in His cause as you ought to strive, (with sincerity and under discipline). He has chosen you, and has imposed no difficulties on you in religion; it is the Millah of your father Ibrahim. It is He who has named you Muslims, both before and in this (Revelation); that the Messenger may be a witness for you, and you be witnesses for mankind!”¹⁷

Allah is addressing us in this ayah, that we are upon the same Deen as Ibrahim (as); since a Muslim is anyone who submits and follow the guidance from Allah (swt). In the Qur'an, Allah (swt) uses the term *Millah* to attribute a particular way, thought and people to a Prophet. Therefore, we find examples of Millat ul-Ibrahim, i.e. the way of Ibrahim (as). As Muslims, we are upon the Millah of Ibrahim (as) in *Tawheed*¹⁸, and upon the Millah of Muhammad (saw), the final Messenger of Allah (swt), in submission to the commandments brought by Islaam.

¹⁷ Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Hajj, 22: 78

¹⁸ Tawheed – (*lit. oneness*) Refers to uniqueness of Allah (swt) and His exclusivity in all matters. It has been classified into two different aspects by the Salaf of the past, Tawheed Ar-Rubobiyyah and Tawheed Ul-Ulohiyyah and into three or four aspects by the 'Ulema Khalaf including Tawheed Al-Asma' was-Sifaat and Tawheed Al-Haakimiyyah. Please refer to *Kitaab ul-Imaan* by Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad for more details.

Ahl ul-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah is not a Madhab

When we are talking about Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah, we are not speaking about the fiqh or madhab of Imaam Abu Hanifah, Imaam Maalik or Imaam Shafi'i nor that of Imaam Ahmed. Since a Madhab is attributed to a particular scholars juristic understanding of a particular matter. For example, if we take the issue of combining the prayer and shortening when travelling - Imaam Abu Hanifah is reported to have allowed shortening of the Salat but not combining; whereas Imaam Shafi'i and the other *a'immah* allowed both to shorten and combine. Yet despite these differences, both are still from Ahl ul-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah. In fact all four of these *a'immah* are from Ahl ul-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah.

Ahl ul-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah is not a Jama'at (Group)

Although many groups claim to be from Ahl ul-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah, Ahl ul-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah itself is not a single group. A group is a collection of individuals who bond together for a particular duty or obligation. For example, we have *Jamaa't ul-Khilafah*, whose purpose is to re-establish the Khilafah, or *Jamaa't ul-Jihad*, whose purpose is to fight Jihad and liberate the Muslim lands from the Kuffar occupation.

Abdullah ibn Masoud (ra) said,

"The Jama'ah is what matches with the obedience to Allah (swt) even if you are alone."

Ahl ul-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah is a Firq (Sect)

Ahl ul-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah is a sect within the deen of Islaam. A sect is a group of individuals who are bonded together with the same understanding on topics related to Belief. Examples of this in Islaam include, Ahl ul Sunnah Wal Jama'ah, Mu'tazilah, Ash'aris, Maturidis

and the Raafidah Shi'ah. To understand the topic further, we will divide it into into four sections and study them in depth:

1. Al Iftiraaq (Sectarian divisions)
2. Al Sunnah
3. Al Jama'ah
4. Attributes of Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah



CHAPTER 2

Al-Iftiraaq (Sectarian Divisions)

There is a notion going through the ummah that there is no differences in terms of belief amongst Jews, Christians and people of other faiths with Islaam and consequently all these will enter Jannah together. This understanding is based upon falsehood and has no basis in the Qur'an nor the Sunnah. Since Allah (swt) has said,

“Verily, this is My way, leading straight. Follow it, follow not (other) paths. They will scatter you about from His (great) path: thus does He command you. So that you may be righteous.”¹⁹

As the above ayah makes clear, there is only one path to follow to please Allah (swt) and that is the path of Islaam. All other paths and religions are false and only mislead one from the correct path.

Others in the Ummah of Muhammad (saw) believe that there is no differences amongst the Muslims and consequently the Sunni, the

¹⁹ Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Ana'am, 6: 153

Shi'ahs and Ahmadis will all enter Jannah as they all recite the Shahadah (*testification of faith*) and more often than not fulfil the five pillars. They cite that the Muslims should be one brotherhood as we have one Qur'an and one sunnah and thus do not have any divisions. However, Allah (swt) narrates a different situation,



“O you who believe! Fear Allah as he should be feared, and die not except in a state of Islaam. And hold fast, all together, to the rope which Allah (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves.”²⁰

The Messenger Muhammad (saw) upon the authority of Jaabir ibn Abdullah said,

“There will continue in my Ummah a group that will fight for the Haq, you will know them until the Day of Judgement, and then ‘Isa ibn Maryam will come down, and the people will say, “O Isa (as)! Lead the Jama’ah (prayer).” He (as) will say “No, only you lead each other, Allah honoured this Ummah that nobody will lead them except the Prophet Muhammad (saw) and their own people.”²¹

From the above two evidences it is quite evident that it is a Divine wisdom from Allah for there to exist divisions in this ummah. No-one can deny this fact from the evidences, nor from the reality we currently preside in. Despite this situation, our duty as Muslims is to seek out the correct path and to follow it.

²⁰ Al-Qur'an, Surah ale-Imraan, 3: 101

²¹ Saheeh Bukhari Hadith no. 225 and Saheeh Muslim Hadith no. 3546

The Number of Divisions in the Ummah

There are numerous ahadith explaining the situation the ummah will be in regarding sects and divisions. The majority of which state that the ummah will be divided into seventy-three sects, all but one would be upon guidance. May Allah (swt) make us with the saved sect.

The Prophet (saw) is reported to have said,

"By the one whose hand is my soul. My Ummah will be divided into 73 sects. 72 will be in hellfire." The Sahabah asked, "Who are the saved sect?" He (saw) said, "Al Jama'ah".

It is narrated on the authority of Abu Huraira that the the Prophet (saw) said,

*"The Jews were divided into 71 or 72 sects, and Christians the same, and my Ummah will be divided into 73 sects."*²²

Abdullah ibn Amru narrates that the Prophet (saw) said,

*"My Ummah will face what Bani Israel faced step by step, even if one of them approached his mother publicly (sexually) there will be one of my Ummah will approach his mother. The people of Israel divided into 72 sects, my Ummah will divide into 73 sects, all of them are in the hellfire, and one of them is in paradise." We asked "Which one is saved?" The Prophet (saw) said, "The one that is with me and my Companions."*²³

²²Tirmidhi, Hadith no. 2564

²³Tirmidhi, Hadith no. 2565. Also narrated with the same wording on the authority of Abu Salamah and Abu Huraira in Kitaab Al Fitān of Sunan ibn Majah, Hadith no. 3981

In the Sharh of Tirmidhi by Imaam Ahwazi comments,

*"The answer to this hadith is in the hadith of Abdullah ibn Amru, that **"all of them are in the hellfire, and one is in Jannah"** and that this is one of the proofs of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) because he (saw) relates to us about the ghayb (unseen). And that the saviour sect is Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah."*

Awf bin Maalik narrated that the Prophet (saw) said,

*"The Jews divided into 71 sects, one is in Jannah and 70 are in hellfire, the Christians were divided into 72 sects. By the one whose hand my soul is in, my Ummah will be divided into 73 sects, 72 are in hellfire." The Sahabah asked "Who are the saved sect?" He (saw) said, "Al-Jama'ah"."*²⁴

Anas bin Maalik narrated that the Prophet (saw) said,

*"The people of Bani Israel will be divided into 71 sects, and My Ummah will be divided into 73 sects, all will be in the hellfire, except one, that is Al Jama'ah."*²⁵

Abu Huraira narrated that the Prophet (saw) said,

*"The Jews were divided into 71 or 72 sects, and Christians the same, and my Ummah will be divided into 73 sects."*²⁶

On one occasion, Mu'awiya ibn Abu Sufyan stood up and delivered a *khutbah* (sermon) and in it he is reported to have said,

²⁴ Sunan ibn Majah, Hadith no. 3982, Kitaab Al Fitan

²⁵ Ibid., Hadith no. 3983, Kitaab Al Fitan

²⁶ Sunan Abu Dawood Hadith no. 3980, Kitaab Al Sunnah

"The Prophet (saw) arose and gave a speech in it he (saw) said, 'This millah will be divided into 73 sects, all will be in hellfire, (only) one is in Jannah, this will be Al-Jama'ah, Al-Jama'ah. And from my Ummah will come sects that follow their hawwa (desires), the way the dog follows his master, until this desire will leave no organ, flesh, vein nor bone except that it will enter (it).'"²⁷

Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan narrated that the Prophet (saw) said,

"The two people of the books divided in their deen into 72 sects, and from this Ummah will be division into 73 sects, all are in hellfire, one is in Jannah, it is Al Jama'ah, Al Jama'ah. and there will be from my Ummah, sects that follow their hawa, the way the dog follows his master, until this desire will leave no organ, or flesh, or vein or bone (except that it will enter). O Arab! If you do not rise and follow what your nabi brought ...(the hadith continues)"²⁸

From the above ahadith, it is abundantly clear that there will be divisions in the Muslim ummah based upon A'qaid matters. It is also clear that the ummah will divide into seventy three sects and only one from these will be upon what the Messenger Muhammad (saw) brought. All else will be in hellfire²⁹. The single saved sect will be known *Al-Firqah Al-Naajiyah* and it has been also given the titles "*Al-Jama'ah*" and "*Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah*". To understand these terms

²⁷ Ibid., Hadith no. 3981 and narrated with the same wording by Mu'awiyah ibn Abu Sufyan in *Kitaab Al Siyar* of Sunan Ad Darimi, Hadith no. 2406,

²⁸ Musnad Imaam Ahmad, Hadith no. 16329

²⁹ That they are in the hellfire does not mean that they will remain in hellfire forever. However, it means that they will be brought to account for their actions and their deviated beliefs whereas *Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah* will only be accounted for their actions.

and to whom they apply, it is vital that we study these individually and in more depth³⁰.

³⁰ It becomes important at this stage to remind the readers again of the importance of naming oneself with titles Islaam has bestowed upon us and not titles which have come from our own desires. Ibn Taymiyyah said, *"It becomes a duty upon a Muslim if someone asks (what should I call myself), to say, I am not Shukayli, nor Kurfandi, I am a Muslim and I follow the Qur'an and the Sunnah. [At that time there was a man called Shukayl that people followed and called themselves Shukayli], we will never divert from the names that Allah (swt) gave us, to a name innovated by people and their parents, which Allah never permitted."* [Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmou' Al-Fattawa, Vol 3 pg. 415]



CHAPTER 3

As - Sunnah

The word as-Sunnah is a famous term in common usage amongst the ummah, which over time has become to be mean the following,

Al Tariqah, the method, path, habit

Al Hikmah, sayings, actions and consent of Muhammad (saw)

Al Qadha, Divine fate

Al Shari'ah, Way of Life

Al 'Aqeedah, the Belief

Ahl ul Haq, People of Truth

Ahl ul Islaam, People of Islaam

Ahl Tawheed, People of Tawheed

An Nafilah, Recommended

The above are just a list of the some of the usages of the term as-Sunnah. Amongst the scholars of this deen, different definitions for as-Sunnah have been attributed.

As-Sunnah amongst the 'Ulema

Amongst Ahl al-Hadith, Sunnah means, "*What has been attributed to the Messenger Muhammad (saw) sayings, actions or consent, or description of*

the way he looks or his character, or his biography whether before missionhood (bi'tha) or after missionhood."

The definition of sunnah adopted by the Ahl-Hadith is one such that a believer imitates the Messenger Muhammad (saw) not solely in ritual acts, but in all acts. They therefore make *Ta'assie* (resemblance) to rasoolullah in everything including the way he moved, walked, ate, sat, smiled etc.

Among Ahl ul Usul, Sunnah is taken to mean, *"What has been attributed to the Messenger Muhammad (saw) specifically on (a matter) that has never been mentioned in the Qur'an. Rather (the matter) has been mentioned by the Messenger (saw) as an elaboration of the Qur'an."*

This definition of as-Sunnah amongst Ahl ul-Usul states the sunnah to be as the second source of revelation after the Qur'an.

Among the Fuqaha of Ahnaaf (Hanafi scholars), Sunnah means, *"The Sunnah is anything that has been proven to be from the Messenger Muhammad (saw) that is not fard, nor waaajib (to do)."*

This definition amongst the Hanafi scholars restricts as-Sunnah to be any action that is recommended in the Shar'iah which the Prophet (saw) used to perform.

Ahl us-Sunnah & Ahl us-Shi'ah

In political usage, *Sunnah* or *Ahl us-Sunnah* means the community who are opposite to the Shi'ah³¹. So when it is said Ahl us Sunnah, we mean those who believe that the first caliph was Abu Bakr, then Umar, then Uthman, then Ali (*radiallahanhum*). Whereas the Raafidah, speak about

³¹ We do not mean the Shi'ah of Imaam Ali (ra) at his time, they were from Ahl us-Sunnah. We are speaking about the Raafidah Shi'ah (Isthna-Ashariyyah, Ja'fariyyah) of today.

the twelve Imaams and their knowledge of the unseen and their infallibility etc. For this reason it is of great importance to distinguish between Ahl us Sunnah and the Shi'ah Raafidiyyah as they are on two different paths.

Ahl us-Sunnah & Ahl ul-Bid'ah

In many situations, when speaking specifically about Ahl us-Sunnah we refer to those who are opposite to Ahl Al Bid'ah³², e.g. deviant Sufis, the Murji'a, Ash'aris etc.

Imaam Muhammad Ibn Sireen said,

"Muslims never before used to distinguish between anybody, until the Fitnah occurred. They never used to ask about isnad, until the Fitnah of the Qur'an³³. After that they used to say: 'Tell us who is your narrators? Who from among you is Ahl Al-Sunnah, we will take your hadith, if they are people of bid'ah we will not take it.'"

And recorded an ad-Darimi he also said,

"Whenever a man takes a Bid'ah, (inevitably) he must leave the Sunnah."

Imaam Ash Shatibi said,

"The Sunnah is mentioned as opposite to the Bid'ah."

³²Al-Bid'ah (lit. innovation) is derived from the verb root, bada'a which means to make something new that never existed previously or to innovate. Al-Bid'ah therefore means an innovation, or a newly invented matter. In Shar'iah, Bid'ah is defined as such things which have been innovated into the Deen of Islaam, in either sayings or actions, that have not been mentioned in the Qur'an and the Sunnah with the intention of growing closer to Allah (swt).

³³Bid'ah that began in the time of Imaam Ahmad, where the people began to say that the Qur'an was creation of Allah (swt). [See Appendix 1 for details]

Imaam Shafi'i said:

"Sunnah, is what I follow, and what I see Ahl Al Hadith follow."

Umar ibn Khattab (ra) said,

"Be careful from the people of desire, they are the enemies of the Sunnah. They are so tired (by what they do) that they do not want to memorise hadith, they will (definitely) become misguided."

Abdullah ibn Umar (ra) and Ali ibn Abu Talib (ra) said,

*"The hawa (desires) for the one who is the enemy to the Sunnah, is Haq (truthful, correct), even if you strike his neck (i.e. kill him) he will still think it to be Haq (truthful, correct)."*³⁴

It is reported that Abdullah ibn Mas'oud and Ubay ibn Ka'ab said,

*"Stay with the Sunnah, it is better than ijtehad in bid'ah"*³⁵

Abdullah ibn Abbas is reported to have said,

"There will never come a year for the people (except that) whenever they innovate, they kill one Sunnah, until there comes a time when all bid'ah become prevalent and Sunnah is (rare)..."

Qadi Iyaad is reported to have said,

"I met the best of people. All of them were people of the Sunnah. They forbid Munkar (haraam) and Bid'ah (innovation)."

³⁴ Kitaab ul Sharh, pg. 112

³⁵ Sunan ad-Darimi, Vol 1 pg. 72

It is reported in Tirmidhi that Abu Bakr Ayyash said,

"People sit down to listen to people who give talks yet they don't deserve to be listened to. They will sit with many (different) people. But the man of Sunnah, Allah will elevate his status and reputation, and the man of bid'ah - no one will remember him."

Abu Dharr is reported in Sunan ad-Darimi, page 532 to have said,

"Three things you should not let people take away from you, to command good and forbid evil, to follow the Sunnah and Jihad for the sake of Allah."

Umar ibn al-Khattab is reported in Sunan ad-Darimi to have said,

"One day there will be people who debate with you the ayat (of Qur'an) and shubuhat (doubtful matters). Free them with the Sunnah! The people of Sunnah are more knowledgeable on the Book than anyone else."

Al Sunnah in the Shari'ah

In the Shari'ah, the word Al-Sunnah carries numerous connotations, some of which include the following,

Al-Seerah & Al-Tariqah – The path and the traditions

Al-Qad'a ul-Allah – The Divine Fate & Destiny

Al-Hikmah – The Divine Wisdom

Al-Wahi – The Divine Revelation

As-Shari'ah – The Islaamic Law

An-Naafilah – Superegatory actions

Al-Seerah & Al-Tariqah

Al-Seerah literally means the *path* and al-Tariqah means the *tradition*. There are naturally two paths, *Sunnah ul-Salaf Al Mahmoudah* – the Praised Traditions and *Sunnat ul-Salaf Al Mazmoumah* – the Dispraised Traditions.

Praised Tradition

Allah (swt) says in the Holy Qur'an,

“Allah wishes to make clear to you and to show you the ordinances of those before you; and (He does wish to) turn to you (in Mercy). And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise”³⁶

It has been recorded in as- Sunan ad-Darimi,

“The Sunnah is the prerequisite to everything”

Dispraised Tradition

Allah (swt) says in the Holy Qur'an,



“We did send apostles before you amongst the religious sects of old, But never came an apostle to them but they mocked him. Even so do we let it creep into the hearts of the sinners.

³⁶ Al-Qur'an, Surah an-Nisa', 4: 26

That they should not believe in the (Message); but the ways of the ancients have passed away.”³⁷

Allah (swt) also says,

“If you stop saying Kufr, Allah forgives everything before, but if you go back...”³⁸

Al-Qad’a Allah

The Sunnah in Sharia’h is also known as *Divine Fate*. Another name this is used by is the *Sunnah of Allah* (Almighty Divine Traditions).

Allah (swt) said,

“Such is the Way (Sunnah) of Allah in days gone by, and you shall find no change in the Ways of Allah.”³⁹

Al-Hikmah

Al-Hikmah is commonly used to mean fiqh (jurisprudence). However, whenever Allah (swt) mentions it in conjunction with the word “*Qur’an*” or “*Kitab*” it is taken to mean Sunnah.

³⁷ Al-Qur’an, Surah al-Hijr, 15: 10 - 13

³⁸ Al-Qur’an, Surah an-Anfaal, 8: 38

³⁹ Al-Qur’an, Surah al-Fath, 48: 23

Allah (swt) said,

“Our Lord, send among them a Messenger from them who shall recite to them Your verses and teach them the Kitab and Hikmah, and purify them; You are the Mighty, the Wise.”⁴⁰

Allah (swt) said,

“As We have sent among you a Messenger (Prophet Muhammad) from yourselves, to recite to you Our verses and to purify you, who will teach you the Kitab and Hikmah, and teach you that of which you have no knowledge.”⁴¹

Allah (swt) said,

“When you have divorced women and they have reached the end of their waiting period, either keep them in kindness or let

⁴⁰ Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 129

⁴¹ Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 151

them go with kindness. But you shall not keep them, being harmful, in order to transgress. Whoever does this wrongs himself. Do not take the verses of Allah in mockery. Remember the favour of Allah upon you, and what He sent down to you from the Kitab and Hikmah to exhort you. Fear Allah and know that He has knowledge of everything.”⁴²

Allah (swt) said,

“Allah has surely been gracious to the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from themselves to recite to them His verses, to purify them, and to teach them the Kitab and Hikmah, though before that they were in clear error.”⁴³

Allah (swt) said,

“But for the Favour of Allah to you (Prophet Muhammad) and His Mercy, a party of them intended to lead you astray, but they only lead themselves astray, and they did not harm you a thing. Allah has sent down to you the Kitab and Hikmah and

⁴² Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 231

⁴³ Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Imraan, 3: 164

*He has taught you what you did not know. The Bounty of Allah to you is ever great."*⁴⁴

In his Tafseer Abdullah ibn Abbas has said,

"Kitab and Hikmah means Qur'an and Sunnah."

Al-Wahi

In the Shari'ah, Sunnah is also taken to mean Al-Wahi (revelation). Wahi is of two types, Qur'anic Wahi and Prophetic Wahi.

Allah (swt) mentions both in the following ayat,

*"And recite of what has been revealed in your own home, of the verses of Allah and the Wisdom. Allah is the Subtle, the Knower."*⁴⁵

And He (swt) also said,

*"He is the one who sends from among them someone illiterate, and he recites to them."*⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Al-Qur'an, Surah an-Nisa, 4: 113

⁴⁵ Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Ahzaab, 33: 34

⁴⁶ Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Juma'ah, 62: 2

The Prophet (saw) said,

*"I left with you two things. As long as you hold firm to them after me, you will never be misguided, the Book of Allah, and my Sunnah."*⁴⁷

Mu'az ibn Jabl narrated that when he was setting off to Yemen, the Prophet (saw) said,

*"If you face a question in the issue of judging, what will you judge by?" Mu'az said, "By the Qur'an". The Prophet (saw) continued, "If you do not find an answer (explicitly)?" Mu'az replied, "By the Sunnah." The Prophet (saw) asked, "What if you do not find in there?" Mu'az then concluded, "I will exhaust utmost effort (make ijtiḥad.)"*⁴⁸

Abdullah ibn Umar said to Jabir,

"O Abu Sha'fah! You are from the faqih of Basra. Do not give fatwa except from Qur'an or Sunnah. If you follow anything other than that, you will be doomed and you will misguide others."

It is recorded in ad-Darimi that Abu Salamah said to Hasan Al Basri,

"There is nobody in Basra that I wanted to meet except you, but I changed my mind when I heard you gave fatwa from your mind (based upon ration)."

⁴⁷ Muwatta' Imaam Maalik, pg. 899 Hadith no. 1395

⁴⁸ Sunan ad-Darimi, pg. 60 Hadith no. 168

Imaam Uza'i narrated:

*"Jibreel (as) used to descend with the Sunnah to the Prophet (saw) the same way he (as) descended to the Prophet (saw) with the Qur'an."*⁴⁹

Al-Shari'ah

Imaam as-Shafi'i and Hasan al-Basri is reported to have said,

"The Shari'ah is the Sunnah."

Sheikh ul-Islaam, Ibn Taymiyyah said:

"The Sunnah is the Shari'ah; what Allah (swt) and his Messenger (saw) legislate from the Deen."

The Opposite of Bid'ah

We have already mentioned how Sunnah is taken to mean the opposite of Bid'ah.

The Prophet (saw) said,

*"Be careful from the innovation in the deen, every innovation is misguidance."*⁵⁰

And it is recorded in Saheeh Bukhari that Ai'sha (ra) narrated the Prophet (saw) said,

"Whoever does any deed not based on our teaching, it is sin."

⁴⁹ Sunan ad-Darimi, Hadith no. 587

⁵⁰ Saheeh Bukhari Vol 13, p149

On one occasion the Messenger (saw) stood and gave a speech, in it he said,

*"Fear Allah, and listen and obey (the Imaam) even (if he were) from an Abyssian slave. After me you will see many disputes and many innovations, be careful from the innovation as every innovation is misguidance."*⁵¹

Naafilah

In Shari'ah, Sunnah can be found to also refer to an-Naafilah (supregatory duties). For example, the two rak'at Sunnah after Maghrib prayers are known as Sunnah as the Prophet (saw) performed them. Or the Tahujjud (night) prayers undertaken usually during the last third of the night. These refer to actions that are additional as opposed to the *fara'id* (obligatory) actions.

Usul ud-Deen

In Shar'iah the Sunnah is often taken to mean the foundations of the Religion. For example matters that refer to the Aqeedah and basis of Islaam. All the books of Aqeedah for Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah are called *Kitab Al Sunnah*. We list only a few as examples of this;

Kitab Al Sunnah, Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal (died 242H)

Kitab Al Sunnah, Abdullah bin Ahmad (d. 290H)

Kitab Al Sunnah, Abu Bakr bin Al Athram (d. 272H)

Kitab Al Sunnah, Ibn Abi Aasim (d. 287H)

Kitab Al Sunnah, Muhammad bin Nasr Al Marwazi (d. 294H)

Kitab Sareeh Al Sunnah, Abu Ja'far al Tahaawie (d. 310H)

Kitab Al Sunnah, Imaam Ahmed bin Muhammad (d. 311H)

Kitab Sharh Usul Al Sunnah, Ibn Batta Al Akburi (d. 387H)

Kitab Al Sunnah, Ibn Abi Zamneen (d. 399H)

⁵¹ Tirmidhi, Hadith no. 2600



CHAPTER 4

Al – Jama’ah

Al-Jama’ah is an Arabic word that linguistically is derived according to Imaam ibn Manzur in his work “*Lisaan ul-Arab*”, from three different root meanings, *Al Ijtimaa’* Unity, *Al Jami’* Gathering together and working collectively and *Al Ijma’* Consensus and Agreement⁵².

Al Jama’ah in Juristic Terminology

The word Jama’ah has different usages amongst the Islaamic Jurist. Of which are the following, the Sahabah, People of Knowledge, People of Jannah, the Ummah under the leadership of one Khaleef.

Al Jama’ah is the Sahabah

The *Fuqaha* of Islaam have used the word Jama’ah to mean the Sahabah. Since, they were united in their understanding and following of one Khaleef, on the main Ahkaam, in Jihad, on ‘Aqeedah and matters of the Deen. They are the ones who transmitted to us the Qur’an and the ahadith. And they are the ones that the Prophet (saw) was pleased with when he passed and said that they would “*Never gather in misguidance.*”

⁵² *The Tongue of the Arab*, Imaam ibn Manzur, Vol 8 pgs. 53-57

Imaam Ash Shaatibi said in Kitaab ul-I'tisaam,

“Al Jama’ah is the Sahabah specifically, since they are the ones who established the deen and those who never gather upon misguidance, and only they will never gather in misguidance.”

Abdullah ibn Mubarak said,

“Al Jama’ah is Abu Bakr and Umar (ra) and they are the saved sect. And he quoted the hadith of the Prophet (saw), “My Ummah will never be gathered on misguidance...”

The Prophet (saw) ordered us to follow them. It is recorded in Abu Dawood that he (saw) said,

“Follow the Jama’ah”

Ibn Umar narrated,

“Allah will never gather this Ummah in misguidance. Allah’s Hand is over the Jama’ah, and whoever is deviant is over the hellfire.”

Al-Jama’ah is the Saved Sect

Al-Jama’ah has been used in ahadith to mean *Firqah an-Naajihah* or the Saved Sect (saved from hellfire).

Awf bin Maalik narrated,

“The Prophet (saw) said, ‘The Jews divided into 71 sects, 1 is in Jannah and 70 are in hellfire, the Christians were divided into 72 sects, 1 is in Jannah and 71 are in hellfire. By the one whose hand my soul is in! My Ummah will be divided into 73 sects, 72 are in

hellfire.’ The Sahabah asked, ‘Who are the saved sect?’ He (saw) said, ‘Al Jama’ah.’”⁵³

Anas bin Maalik narrated,

“The Prophet (saw) said, “The people of Bani Israel will be divided into 71 sects, and My Ummah will be divided into 73 sects, All of which are in hellfire, except one, that is Al Jama’ah.”⁵⁴

Al-Jama’ah is the People of Knowledge

The Prophet (saw) said,

“Al Jama’ah is Ahl Al Ilm. Allah (swt) has made them hujjah (guides) upon the people, and made the people follow them.”

Imaam Bukhari said,

“Al Jama’ah are Ahl Al Ilm, those that follow the Prophet (saw) and his companions and those who follow them after.”

It is important here to emphasise that the scholars hold a precarious position in Islaam since there are many evidences and ahadith indicating their seats in hellfire awaiting their intentional mistakes. However, the scholars that are al-Jama’ah as mentioned by Imaam Bukhari are those that follow the understanding of the Prophet (saw), his (saw) Companions and those that came after them upon their way.

⁵³ *Kitab Al Fitan*, Sunan ibn Majah, Hadith no. 3982

⁵⁴ *Kitab Al Fitan*, Sunan ibn Majah, Hadith no. 3983

Al-Jama'ah are the People of Paradise

Umar ibn Khattab (ra) said,

*"O People! I stand today on the same position the Prophet (saw) stood one day and he (saw) said, "I ask you to fear Allah with my Companions, and those who follow them after, and after them those who follow after, after that people will start to spread lies, and people will become witness though nobody asked for their witness, do not let any man be alone with any woman, the shaytan will be with them. Shaytan is with the one and far from the two. Whoever wants to be in the heart of Jannah, let him be with the Jama'ah, and whoever is happy when he does the good deed, and is sad when he does the bad deed, he is the mu'min."*⁵⁵

The Prophet (saw) said,

*"Be careful and treat my companions well! Follow my companions, and those who come after them, and those who come after them, after that there will be widespread lies, until a man gives testimony that nobody asked from him. Whosoever wants to see the heart (or the reward/pleasure) of Jannah, let him be with the Jama'ah, because the shaytan is with the individual, and is far from the two."*⁵⁶

Al-Jama'ah is the Ummah under one Khaleef

Al-Jama'ah has been used in numerous ahadith to mean the Muslim ummah under the guidance and unity of one Khaleef.

⁵⁵ Sunan Tirmidhi, Vol 1, page 18

⁵⁶ Musnad Imaam Ahmad, Vol 1 page 24, Hadith no. 115 and Sunan Tirmidhi Hadith no. 2165

It is recorded in Saheeh Muslim that the Prophet (saw) said,

*"Whoever sees from his amir, anything bad, let him be patient (i.e. do not rise against him), the one who keeps away from Al Jama'ah and dies, will die the death of Jahiliyyah."*⁵⁷

The Prophet (saw) said:

*"Whosoever gives up obedience (to the Khaleef), and distances himself from the Jama'ah, and dies, he will die the death of Jahiliyyah."*⁵⁸

Hudhaifah (ra) narrated that people used to ask the Prophet (saw) about the good and he used to always ask about the bad in order not to face that evil. Once he asked the Prophet (saw),

"We used to be in Jahiliyyah, in evil, and after that we are in good, will there be after that any evil?" He (saw) said, "Yes", Hudhaifah continued, "And after that will there be good?" He (saw) said, "Yes, but it will have defection", He asked, "What is the defection?" Muhammad (saw) said, "People will guide others opposite to my guidance. You know some of what they say (is good), and you reject others (of what they say)." He asked, "And after that will there be evil?" He (saw) said, "Yes. There are callers to the hellfire, whoever responds to them are people of hellfire." Hudhaifah said, "Describe them to us." He (saw) said, "They are from our people, and they speak our tongues," He asked, "What should I do if I face that?" He (saw) said, "Be with the Jama'atul muslimineen under one Imaam." He asked, "And if there is no Jama'ah?" He (saw) said, "Do not be with

⁵⁷ Saheeh Bukhari, Hadith no. 7054

⁵⁸ Saheeh Muslim, Vol 12, page 441 and Sunan Nisa'i Hadith no. 4125. The death of jahiliyyah here means he will die sinful.

the deviants, even if you bite the trunk of the tree until you pass away.”⁵⁹

Furthermore, the Prophet (saw) said,

“There is going to be after me calamity after calamity. Whoever you see leaving the Jama’ah, or wants to divide you when you are united under the Jama’ah, kill him whoever he is. Allah’s Hand is over the Jama’ah. The Shaytan is far from the Jama’ah.”⁶⁰

Al-Jama’ah is the Consensus

One can find the word al-Jama’ah in the ahadith referring to the consensus and agreement amongst the believers. It is reported in Musnad Imaam Ahmad that Nu’mān ibn Bashir narrated that the Prophet (saw) said,

“The one who is not grateful for the little (blessing), is not grateful for the greater (blessing) and the one who did not thank the people, will never thank Allah. To speak about the blessings of Allah, is shukr, and not to speak about the blessings is kufr (ungratefulness). Consensus is mercy, and disagreement and dispute is punishment.”

It is reported that Abdullah ibn Umar (ra) said,

“My father stood up one day and said that the Prophet (saw) arose in the same manner and gave khutbah (a speech). In it He (saw) said, “I ask you to follow my companions, (and) those who follow after, and those who follow after them. After that (period) lies will be spread, and a man will give oath and nobody requested him to give qasam (oath), and a man will give testimony and nobody asked for his testimony, no man will have seclusion with a woman except that

⁵⁹ Recorded in Saheeh Muslim, Hadith no. 1847 and Saheeh Bukhari, Hadith no. 6557

⁶⁰ Sunan an-Nisa’i, Hadith no. 3954

shaytan will be the third among them. Have consensus. Shaytan is with the one and far from the two. Whoever wants to attain the centre of jannah, let him be with the group."

Al-Jama'ah is Ahl Hall wal 'Aqd

It has been reported in some of the ahadith that those of al-Jama'ah are also known as the people of influence and importance. It is narrated in Fath ul Bari by Ibn Batta that al-Jama'ah is al Ahl Hall wal Aqd.

Al-Jama'ah are the Groups

Al-Jama'ah amongst the jurists has also been used to refer to the groups that gather together to fulfil a particular duty. For example either to command good, or forbid evil, or work for the Khilafah or work in the field of Jihad⁶¹.

Allah (swt) said,

*"Let there rise from among you groups, that call to the khair (Islaam), that command good and forbid evil, and they are the successful."*⁶²

It is reported in Abu Dawood, Hadith No. 2197, that the Prophet (saw) said,

"If you go to Jihad, gather together and go as a Jama'ah."

⁶¹ It is important to note that when individuals gather together for a particular purpose and this leads them to become a separate Sect in Belief, then this gathering is dispraised.

⁶² Al-Qur'an, Surah ale-Imraan, 3: 104

Al-Jama'ah is the Salat in the Masjid

Al-Jama'ah has been used is the ahadith to refer to the salah that is performed in congregation in the mosque.

Uthman ibn 'Affan narrated in Saheeh Muslim, Hadith No. 1049 that the Prophet (saw) said,

"Whoever prays Isha in Jama'ah, it is as if he prayed qiyaam (night prayer) half of the night. And whoever (also) prays Fajr in Jama'ah (congregation) it is as if he prayed qiyaam all the night."

It is recorded in Saheeh Muslim, Hadith No. 609, that Abdullah ibn Umar reported that the Prophet (saw) said,

"Praying in Jama'ah is rewardable 27 times more than individually."

It is recorded in Saheeh Muslim Hadith No. 1045, that Ibn Mas'oud said,

"We used to consider the one who did not pray Jama'ah in the masjid munafiq, even some of the ill men, used to come to the masjid carried by two men, and Allah used to teach us Huda (guidance), and the sign of the huda is to pray in the masjid where you can hear the adhan, anybody who prays behind the Imaam is (in) Jama'ah"

There are four types of people excluded from the Juristic definition of Al Jama'ah:

1. *Ahl Al-Bid'ah*, People of Innovation
2. *Al-Firaq al-Haalika*, Deviant Sects
3. *Ahl Al-Baaghie*, The people who are rebellious against the state
4. *Faasiq Fajir*, People who do not practise Islaam



CHAPTER 5

Ahl Sunnah wal - Jama'ah

We have already touched upon the definition and meanings of ahl Sunnah and al-Jama'ah in the Shari'ah and amongst the fuqaha of Islaam. Now we will explain a little more about the title Ahl ul-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah.

The title Ahl ul-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah was used by Abdullah ibn Abbas when he commented on the verse *"On the Day of Judgment the people will be faces bright or dark"* saying,

"Those people whose faces will be bright will be Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah, and those whose face will be dark will be Ahl Al Bid'ah wal Firqah."

Who is from Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah?

If you use the above term generally, then it means to be opposite to the *Shi'ah*, i.e. to be Sunni accepting the Sahabah in totality and rejecting the issue of Imaamah and their *I'ssmah* (infallibility). Specifically, Ahl Sunnah wal Jama'ah refers to those who follow the Prophet (saw) and the understanding of the Sahabah (companions) and those that followed them *bil Ihsaan* i.e. the Tabi'een and Tabi' Tabi'een. This is because the Prophet (saw) said,

"The best Ummah is my Generation (Sahabi). Then those that followed (Tabi'een). Then those that followed them (Tabi' Tabi'een)."

Therefore, those of Ahl Sunnah wal Jama'ah follow the teaching of the Messenger Muhammad (saw) upon the understanding of the shahabah and consequently the Khawaarij, Shi'ah, Murji'a, Qadariyyah and Jahmiyyah are excluded from it.

The Names and Titles of Ahl Sunnah wal Jama'ah

In the books of the *fuqaha* the Ahl Sunnah wal Jama'ah have been afforded the following different titles and names;

Al Taa'ifah Al Mansoorah - The Victorious Sect

Al Taa'ifah Al Zhaahirah - The Dominating Sect

A'immatul Huda - The Imaams of Guidance

Ahl Al Quroun Al Faadhilah - The People of the Best Century

Ashaab Al Sunnah wal Hadith - People of Sunnah and Hadith

Al Salaf Al Saalih - The Pious Predecessors

Al Firqah Al Naajiyah - The Saviour Sect

Ahl Al Ittibaa' - The People of Submission

Al Jama'ah - The Sect

Al Ghurabaa - The Strangers

Ahl Al Athar - People of Narration

Jama'atul Muslimeen - Muslimeen under one Khalif

Ahl Al Ilm - People of Knowledge

Al Salafiyyah - Those of the pious predecessors

What is their Description

Ibn Taymiyyah in his Majmoua' al-Fattawa Vol 3 Page 358 said, *"They are the Companions of the Prophet (saw). They are called Ahl us-Sunnah because they always follow the Shari'ah, and Jama'ah because they are united together without even meeting."*

Sifaat & Simaat of Ahl Sunnah wal Jama'ah

The following are some of the attributes and qualities of Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah as opposed to the other sects of Islaam;

1. They are those that hold to the Rope of Allah (swt)

It is reported by Imaam al-'Akburi that Abu Bakr Al Siddiq (ra) said,

*"Ahl us-Sunnah are those who hold on to the Rope of Allah (swt) without any compromise."*⁶³

It is also reported that Umar ibn Khattab (ra) said,

*"There will be one day people who will debate with you about the shubuhaat of the Qur'an (to make ta'weel and interpretaion). Deal with them by the Sunnah. The People of Ahl us-Sunnah know the Book of Allah better than anyone else."*⁶⁴

Therefore the most important *Sifaat* (attribute) of Ahl Sunnah Wal Jama'at is that they stick closely and solely to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, using it alone in their arguments and discussions without any compromise.

2. They are the Best Example and guide to the Right Path

It is narrated in the books of *Tafaseer* of Al-Qurtubi and ibn Kathir that Abdullah Ibn Abbas (ra) said in relation to the verse, *"The Day when faces will be whitened and faces blackened."*⁶⁵

⁶³ Imaam Ubaidullah bin Muhammad bin Battah al-'Akburi, Kitab Sharh wal Ibaanah, pg. 120

⁶⁴ Imaam 'Abd Allah ibn 'Abd al Rahman al Darimi, Sunan Al Darimi, Vol. 1 pg.49

⁶⁵ Al-Qur'an, Surah ale-Imraan, 3: 106

"Those whose face become bright are Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah, and those whose faces become dark are Ahl Al Firqah wal Bid'ah."

It is recorded that Amru bin Qayes Al Mullaie (d.143h) said,

*"When you see a young man, grown up amongst Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah, testify him to be good. And if you see him with the people of Bid'ah, wash your hands of him (be rid of him). Verily the young man is what he is grown up with. If a man likes to be with the people of ilm from his childhood he will be safe."*⁶⁶

It is narrated that Ayoub al Sikhtiyaani (d.131h) said,

*"One of the most blessed things for any youth or non-arab, is for Allah to guide him to an 'Alim from Ahl Al Sunnah."*⁶⁷

It is narrated that Qadi Al Fudhayl bin Iyaad (d. 187h) said,

"Imaam Ahmad, said 'Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah are the victorious group, and the Ahl al Hadith."

We can see from the statements of the Sahabi, the Tabi'een and the Tabi' Tabi'een that it was considered a great *Ni'ma* (blessing) to be of the Ahl Sunnah wal Jama'ah and that following an A'lim of the Sunnah is the way for success and safety in the Here After.

3. They do not call themselves by any innovated names except those used by the Salaf (pious predecessors of the first three generations)

⁶⁶ *al-'Akburī*, Kitāb al Sharh wal Ibaanah, pg 133

⁶⁷ *Imaam Al Laal'ikaie*, Sharh Usul I'tiqaad Ahl us-Sunnah, Vol 1 pg. 60

As Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah do not innovate in any matter, they return back to the *adillah* (evidences) of Islaam to choose names and titles from since Allah (swt) said,

"If they believe in what you believe (Prophet (saw) and his Companions (ra)), then they will be guided. And if they are diverted they are diverted to the wrong path."⁶⁸

It is recorded in Kitab Al-Sharh, pg 137 that Ibn Abbas (ra) said,

"Whosoever calls himself any sectarian or innovated name, he has removed the bond of Islaam from his neck."

It is reported by Qadi Iyaad that that a man asked Imaam Maalik,

*"Who is a man of Ahl us Sunnah?" Imaam Maalik said, "The one who has no known titles (the likes of) Jahmies, Rafidis, (and he continued)."*⁶⁹

Ibn Qayyim recorded that a man once asked Imaam Ahmad about Ahl Al Sunnah, and he (Imaam Ahmad) replied,

*"The one who has no name but Al Sunnah, is from Ahl Al Sunnah."*⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Baqarah, 2: 137

⁶⁹ Tarteeb Al Madarik, Vol. 1 pg. 72

⁷⁰ Ibn Qayyim, Madarik Al Salikeen, Vol. 3 pg. 174

Imaam Maalik bin Maghoul (d.159h) is reported to have said,

*"If somebody calls himself something anything other than Islaam or Al Sunnah, call him by whatever deen you wish."*⁷¹

It is reported by al-'Akburi that Imaam Maimun bin Mahran (d.117h) said,

*"Woe to you! If you (dare) call yourself different than the name of Al Islaam."*⁷²

4. They always follow the Sunnah and do not follow any Bid'ah

It is reported in Kitab Al Sharh wal Ibaana that, Al Fudhayl bin Iyaad (d.187h) said,

"I met all the best people and (found them to be) Ahl Al Sunnan (the people of the Sunnah). All of them forbade the following of the people of Bid'ah."

The characteristic of the people of Ahl-Sunnah is that they believe that it is not sufficient just to say we follow the Sunnah, but we have to follow it by our sayings and actions and as well forbid those who follow the bid'ah and warn against their adherents.

It is recorded in the Kitab Al I'tiqaad for Imaam Al Laalikaie, that once people approached Sheikh Abu Bakr bin 'Ayaash (d. 194h) and asked him,

⁷¹ Imaam As Suyouti, Al Durr Al Manthour, Vol. 2 pg.63 and Imaam Al Laali'kaie, Kitab Al Sharh, Vol. 1 pg. 62

⁷² Al 'Akburi , Kitab Al Sharh, pg. 137

"There are many (of those who claim to be) Sunni. Who is the (real) Sunni?" Abu Bakr bin 'Ayaash replied, "The Sunni is the one who if you speak about hawa (desires), it does not affect him in any way."

The one who follows the Sunnah it is sufficient for him and therefore no desires, nor any temptations can sway him away from this path. However, those who follow the bid'ah, take their own whims and desires in addition to what the Messenger Muhammad (saw) brought, and thus the Sunnah is not sufficient for them. Rather, they desire to follow their own opinions over the Sunnah.

Once Sheikh ul-Islaam ibn Taymiyyah was asked who is of Ahl us-Sunnah wal Jama'ah, he replied,

*"They are the best of the Ummah and the wasata (highest). They are the ones who follow the right path, the people of Haq, and justice, and they forbid the bid'ah and are only partisan to the haq."*⁷³

5. They are Al-Ghurabaa' (The Strangers), Al-Taa'ifah Al-Zaahirah (the Zaahiri Group) and Al-Firqah al-Naajiyah (The Saved Sect)

It is reported on the authority of Abu Huraira that the Messenger Muhammad (saw) said,

*"Islaam began as something strange and will return as something strange. Tooba (Give glad tidings) for the strangers."*⁷⁴

⁷³ Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmou' Al Fattawa, Vol 3 pgs 368-369

⁷⁴ Saheeh Muslim, Vol 1 Hadith No. 270

It is reported that Sufyan Al Thawrie⁷⁵ (d.161h) said,

*"Treat Ahl us-Sunnah wal Jama'ah well, they are the Ghurabaa'. If you hear that there is a man in the East and a man in the West, both men of Sunnah, send them salam (your salutations). How rare (now) is Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah."*⁷⁶

Imaam Hasan Al Basri said,

*"The Sunnah of Allah is always clear, distinguishing between the one who is soft and the one who is harsh. Stand firm to the Sunnah (Shari'ah). Ahl us-Sunnah were always a small minority, and tomorrow will become less. They are neither people of extravagance nor people of ration and bid'ah. Stand firm to the Sunnah!"*⁷⁷

Abdullah ibn Mubaarak (d.181h) said,

*"Be aware! Today, I see the death as karamah (blessing) for every Muslim who meets Allah on the Sunnah (Shari'ah). We belong to Allah and to Him we will return. For Allah we supplicate to and complain of our isolation from others. Most of the ikhwaan from Ahl us-Sunnah pass away, and the people of bid'ah begin to spread. To Allah we appeal to make it easy for us, when the bid'ah is spread and the 'ulemah start to disappear."*⁷⁸

The people of Sunnah do not call for unity with other groups who are upon the batil and deviance, because they are on the Haq. They call all people to hold on to the rope of Allah, and by doing this unity will be

⁷⁵ Abdul Rahman ibn Mahdi said, "People are of different levels. Some of them are Imaams of the Sunnah and of the Hadith, and some of them are Imaam of Hadith but not the Sunnah. The one who is Imaam of the Sunnah and Imaam of the Hadith is Sufyan al Thawri."

⁷⁶ Al Laalikaie, Kitab Usul Al I'tiqaadie, Vol 1 pg. 64

⁷⁷ ad-Darimi, Sunan Al Darimi, Vol 1 pg. 72, Hadith 218

⁷⁸ Imaam ibn Wadhaah, Kitab Al Bida'h pg. 39

achieved. However, the people of Baatil and Bid'ah will unite with anyone because they do not have the Haq. The Haq is the Haq (truth) even if only one person is upon it.

It is recorded that Qadi Iyaad said,

"What Imaam Ahmad meant when he said Ahl Al Hadith is Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah is that Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah have many names, (including) At-Taa'ifah al-Mansoura. This is divided into two, those of them who are brave fighters, and those who are the ulema and the fuqaha, defending the shar'iah i.e commanding good and forbidding evil"

Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah Adeel is reported to have said,

"Taa'ifah Mansoura is a group of Mujahideen amongst the fighters of Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah. They will have all the necessary means of victory, and have a particular understanding of the sunan, and have the correct A'qeedah."

6. Ahl Sunnah wal Jama'ah are those who do Ihyaa Faridatul Jihad wal Munaafah – They always revive the obligation of Jihad and Commanding Good and Forbidding Evil

It is recorded on the authority of Umar bin Al-Khattab (ra) in 'Al-Arbao'un an-Nawawi' that the Prophet (saw) said,

"I have been ordered to fight against people until they testify that there is no god but Allah and that Muahmmmed is the Messenger of Allah and until they perform the prayers and pay the Zakat, and if they do so they will have gained protection from me for their lives and property, unless [they do acts that are punishable] in accordance with Islaam, and their reckoning will be with Allah the Almighty."

Jabir ibn Abdullah narrated that the Prophet (saw) said,

"There will continue in my Ummah a group that will fight for the Haq. You will know them until the Day of Judgement. Then 'Isa ibn Maryam will descend, and the people will say "O Isa, lead the Jama'ah (prayer)." He will say, 'No! You lead each other, Allah honoured this Ummah that nobody will lead them except the Prophet Muhammad (saw) and their own people'"⁷⁹

It is recorded in Saheeh Muslim, on the authority of Uqbah bin Aamer that the Prophet Muhammad (saw) said,

"There will always be a small portion which will fight for the sake of Allah. Whoever disagrees with them doesn't harm them and they will continue like this until the Day of Judgement."

It is reported that the Prophet (saw) said,

"There will always be a group of my Ummah that will fight for the Haq (truth), until the last of them fights the Dajjal."

It is recorded in the Musnad of Imaam Ahmed and An-Nasaie that Salamah bin Kafay said,

"I was sitting with the Prophet (saw), and I said to him, "O Rasulullah (saw)! People remove the saddle from the horses, and put away the weapons, and say there is no jihad." The Prophet (saw) arose angrily and said, "They are liars! The fighting is just beginning. There will continue from my Ummah, a portion that will fight for the truth, Allah will divert the hearts of some people, and there will be people that will benefit from them until the Day of Judgement. And it has been revealed to me that I will pass away and

⁷⁹ Imaam Muslim, Saheeh Muslim Hadith no. 3546

I will not stay with you, and you will follow me one by one, until a time comes when you will be diverted from following me and you will kill each other, and the household of the believers will return to Al Sham."

Sheikh ul-Islaam Ibn Taymiyyah said,

"Ahl us-Sunnah wal Jama'ah are of two types, Mujahideen and Munafehoon; one is the Mujahideen of the sword and the other is the Mujahideen of the word."

7. The are the people of Hadith, Riwaayah and Diraayah

They are people of verification who always check both the *isnaad* (chain of narrators) and *matin* (content) of Ahadith.

It is reported by Imaam al-Khatib that the Prophet (saw) said,

*"This deen will be carried by khalaf (responsible) after you. From every khalaf, the trustworthy among them will carry it, they will remove all the exaggerations that have been written, the false narrators and the interpretations of the ignorant"*⁸⁰

Imaam ibn Sireen (d110h) said,

*"The Tabi'een never asked about isnad. When the Fitnah broke out, they began to ask, "Tell us the name of your man of your hadith." Whatever they said, they would take it (because it was verified). (When) they looked to the people of bid'ah, they never took (anything as they were not verified)."*⁸¹

⁸⁰ *Al Imaam Al A'laai'ie*, Bughdatul Multamiss pg. 34-35

⁸¹ *Imaam Muslim*, Saheeh Vol 1 pg. 15, and *Tirmizi*, Kitab Al 'Ilal Vol 5 pg. 740

8. They are those who will always be missed

They are those who when they pass away, people will miss them as they spread knowledge and goodness wherever they go.

It is recorded in Kitab usul Al I'tiqad that Ayyub Al Sikhityaani (d.131h) said,

*"If I hear news that someone from Ahl us-Sunnah has passed away, it is as if I have lost a part of my body. Those who wish for them to die, (Allah (swt) says in Surah Saff) 'They wish to extinguish the light of Allah with their tongues, but Allah has decreed that he will fulfil the deen, even if the kuffar hate it.'"*⁸²

When Imaam Abdul Aziz bin Muhammad Al Daarwordi (d.187h) passed away, the people went to visit Sufyan bin U'yainah (d.192h) and found him to be ill as a result of the news, they said to him,

*"We never knew that you would be affected like this." He said: "He was (a man) from Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah."*⁸³

Mu'afah bin Umran (d.186h) said,

*"Do not praise any man except when he passes away, either he died on Ahl us-Sunnah you say May Allah have mercy on him, or he died on bid'ah you say may Allah forgive him."*⁸⁴

A'won bin Abdullah Al Kufie (d.120h) said,

*"Whoever dies on Islaam and Sunnah, he has all the good news."*⁸⁵

⁸² Sheikh Abu Na'im, Al-Hulyah Vol 3 pg. 9

⁸³ Imaam Laa'likaie, Usul Al I'tiqad Vol 1 pg. 60

⁸⁴ Ibid., Vol 1 pg.67

9. They are always between the two sectarian divisions; they are Firm (*al-Wasat*) without Exaggeration (*I'tidaal*)

Ahl Sunnah wal-Jama'ah are in the middle between the Khawaarij and the Murji'. The Khawaarij believe that if any Muslim commits sin, they become apostate, and the Murji' believe that Imaan is in the heart, and the actions will not affect the Imaan at all. Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah do not make takfeer on sin, however, nor do they excuse any kufr.

10. Their sources of Shari'ah are the Qur'an and the Sunnah in accordance to the understanding of the Sahabah in all matters of Deen

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah only accept the understanding of the Messenger Muhammad (saw) and his Companions as they are the best to understand the text and nobody can compare in knowledge or Imaan to them. They do not accept the understanding of anybody else, and do not accept for people to make interpretation however they wish.

11. They do not elevate any particular man, women, angel or stone by name and take from the Messenger Muhammad (saw) only

They do not elevate any particular scholar, or Imaam or any such person, only the Messenger (saw) as Allah (swt) has ordered us to do so. They love the Qur'an more than anybody for the sake of Allah, and they love and are attached to the sunnah for the sake of Allah alone, more than anyone else.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol 1 pg. 67

12. They do not debate with Ahl-Bid'ah or Rationalists (Mu'tazila) in any matters pertaining to Deen

Since Ahl us-Sunnah wal Jama'ah stick firmly to the understanding of the Sahabah and those that follow them, they follow the Haq and have no need to debate with the people of ration, nor those of innovation. Rather, they provide the evidences for their opinions from the Qur'an and the Sunnah in accordance to the understanding of the sahabah, and reject opinions based upon ration and innovation.

13. They reject Ta'weel (false interpretation) and they submit to the Shari'ah literally in accordance to the understanding of the Sahabah

The Qur'an was revealed to the Messenger Muhammad (saw) and He (saw) taught his Sahabah its understanding (tafseer). Ta'weel is used by some Muslim sects to give interpretations of certain ayats of Qur'an and Hadith away from the understanding of the Companions in order to fit certain conditions and rules they have constructed from their own 'Aql (minds). Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah does not perform Ta'weel without evidences from the understanding of the Sahabah, and rather they stick to and submit to the meanings of the Divine Texts literally in accordance to the Best Generation (sahabah).

14. They put the Divine Text (Al-Wahi) before the mind (al-'Aql)

Some Muslim sects consider the mind to be a greater discerning factor for the establishment of the 'Aqeedah than even the Qur'an and Sunnah. Consequently, they do not follow the understanding of the Sahabah in these matters, but stick to the understanding they derive from the use of their mind. Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah consider the Qur'an and the Sunnah to be above and better than the mind and thus do not take it as an evidence to establish the Islaamic 'Aqeedah from.

15. They have Intellectual Affiliation without even needing to meet or declare such

Most of those who are Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah have never met, yet they have unity in all their thoughts, concepts and rules. Imaam Bukhari said,

*"It is not necessary that they are gathered together in one place, they are always spread in different places all over the world."*⁸⁶

Ibn Taymiyyah in his Majmoua' al-Fattawa Vol 3 Page 358 said,

"They are called Ahl us-Sunnah because they always follow the Shari'ah, and Jama'ah because they are united together without even meeting."

Commenting on Ahl Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah, Imaam Al Asbahani said in his Kitab Al Hujjah Fee Bayan Al Mahajjah that,

"The best proof that Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah, Ahl Al Hadith is Ahl Al Haq, that if you read all their books, in the past or the present, despite different time, and different place, and despite the distance between them, on the aqeedah you find them on the same tune, and the same form, and the same method and the same path, their saying is one, their reference is one, rather if you compile all that they have said and what they have uttered, you will find that it is as if it came from one person, and from the tongue of one man, Muhammad (saw)."

⁸⁶ Sharh Muslim, Vol 13 pg 67

It is reported in Fath ul-Baari that the Messenger Muhammad (saw) said,

“There will always be a sect in my Ummah, that will always be united and (know what they are calling for) dominating (all others).”

In his explanation of this hadith, Ibn Hazm said that

“This is Ahl Al Hadith - Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama’ah”

Summary

In summary, the Firqah Ahl us-Sunnah wal Jama’ah stand firm on the Deen and stick closely to the Sunnah, rejecting any innovation and attacking the Bid’ah and those that carry it. They are united in their understanding of ‘Aqeedah in every era and are keen for the unity of the Muslims on the Haq, rejecting the labelling of the Muslims causing sectarian strife and differences.



CHAPTER 6

The Muslim Sects

We have seen and defined who and what is Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah. We have also listed some of their signs and attributes. We now present to you some of the other Sects in Islaam and the differences that they have with Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah which have led them to become deviated from the correct path.

Allah (swt) said,



*"O you believe, fear your Lord truly and do not die except as a Muslim. Unite together with the Rope of Allah and do not be divided."*⁸⁷

Allah (swt) in this verse is warning the muslims that we must have unity and not to be divided. However, the condition of this unity is that it must be based upon the *"Rope of Allah"* which has been defined by some of the Mufasireen to mean al-Qur'an wal Sunnah. And the message of these are clear, the Tawheed of Allah (swt).

⁸⁷ Al-Qur'an, Surah ale-Imraan, 3: 102 - 103

Therefore, Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah does not want unity based upon anything other than Tawheed, neither on nationalism nor tribalism nor partisanship nor race or colour.

The Prophet (saw) is reported in at-Tirmizi and Musnad Imaam Ahmed to have said,

*"My Ummah will be divided into seventy-three sects. All of them will be in the hellfire except one. They (the Sahabah) asked, "Who is this saviour sect?" He (saw) said: "Al Jama'ah, Al Jama'ah, Al Jama'ah."*⁸⁸

He (saw) is also reported to have said,

"Among those seventy-three sects are seventy-two that are Haalika (ruined) and one that is the Naajiyah (saved)."

From the above evidences we can conclude that the sectarian divisions that exist today and those that existed previously are the Sunnah (traditions) of Allah (swt) and cannot be changed. In fact, they are sent as a test from Allah to differentiate those who are sincere to Him and want to follow His (swt) way, from those who wish to follow aught but their own desires.

However, having said that divisions is something dispraised, we are then informed in the Hadith of those that are misguided and those that are guided. In the Hadith, *Haalika* means those that will be punished in

⁸⁸ It is reported that Imaam Ash Shaatibi said in Kitab ul-I'tisaam, *"Al Jama'ah is the Sahabah specifically, since they are the ones who established the deen and those who never gather in misguidance."*

hellfire because of the incorrect beliefs they held in relation to Allah (swt). However, this punishment will not be forever⁸⁹.

The Hadith then mentions the *Naajiyah* which is the saviour sect and will not enter the Hell-fire because of their belief, but may still enter it because of their actions. The *Firqah Naajiyah* (al-Jama'ah) will always be a minority as we have numerous ayat in the Qur'an where Allah (swt) dispraises the majority, and in addition to this, the majority of the sects (72 out of 73) will be misguided. The guided sect is known by the evidences they carry and by measuring them to the Haq. However, having said this, all the sects are Muslims sects and are known as Ahl Al Qiblah. But the saviour sect is Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah

The Main Sects in Islaam

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah

We have mentioned how the Ulema have said that the Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah are the Sahabah, and those that follow the Sunnah and their way. The Sahabah therefore are the *Salafus Saalih*⁹⁰, the pious predecessors. Our era for the Sahabah are the *Khalaf*, those that come after. However, although their era is generally known as the *Salaf*, we make the differentiation because people like Abu Lahab, Abu Jahal and Abu Taalib who linguistically are the Salaf, but are not Muslim, by adding the title *Saalih*, pious.

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah are therefore those who follow the Salafu Saalih⁹¹.

⁸⁹ According to the Islaamic evidences, the Believers will never be left in hellfire forever, but rather will enter it either because of their incorrect beliefs or their incorrect actions or because of both.

⁹⁰ It is reported that Imaam al-Awzaa'ee said, "*Stick to the footsteps of the predecessors, even if people abandon you. Beware of the views of men, even if they beautify it for you with words.*"

⁹¹ The salaf have views on all the above mentioned topics, so if we follow their opinions on these issues, then we are following the saviour sect, and if we follow anyone else then

Al-Khawaarij

The Khawaarij were the first sect in Islaam following one man called Zhul Khuwaysirah Al Tamimie. The Khawaarij are the closest to Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah when it comes to the understanding of ibaadah (worship) and other matters but are the farthest away from Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah in their understanding of Takfeer.

It is recorded in both Saheeh Bukhari and Saheeh Muslim that Abu Sa'eed Al Khudree said,

"Whilst Imaam Ali was in Yemen, he sent a collection of money to the Prophet (saw). The Prophet (saw) received the wealth and it was divided between four men of different tribes, but none of them where Qurayshi. One from the Quraysh was angry that they had no received any money and said, "The prophet (saw) gave to the people of Najd, and not to us!" The Prophet (saw) said, "I did so in order for these peoples to be closer to Islaam, because they (are of the people who) like money a lot." Upon saying this, one man arose.

His description was that he had a big beard, and two large cheeks, with very small eyes, an extended forehead and a completely shaved head. He said, "Fear Allah! Ya Muhammad!" The Prophet (saw) replied to him, "Who could obey Allah (swt), if I disobey Allah? Allah entrusts me over all the people of the earth, and you don't trust me." The man turned his back to Muhammad (saw) while he was speaking and left. Khalid bin Walid said, "Ya Rasulullah! Give me permission to kill him!" The Prophet (saw) said, "From his progeny

we are deviant from the path of the Sahabah. Nobody claims that Imaam Shafi'i, Imaam Abu Hanifah, Imaam Maalik or Imaam Ahmed are better or more knowledgeable than Abu Bakr or Umar nor any other sahabi. Let alone for anyone after the sahabah to be better than them, so how can we follow anyone else's opinion and understanding of the Qur'an above the companions of Muhammad (saw)? The four Imaams however followed the salaf. The disputes between the Muslims and the formation of the sects did not occur except after the sahabah.

and from his children will be people who recite the Qur'an very well, but it will never reach their throats, and they will kill the Muslims, and will not fight the Mushrikeen. They will leave the deen like the (way the) arrow leaves the bow. If I meet them I will kill them the way the people of 'Aad were killed."

The man mentioned in the Hadith was Zhul Khuwaisirah Al Tamimie. When Umar ibn Khattab heard about the incident, he went immediately to the Prophet (saw) and asked permission to kill him. The Prophet (saw) replied to him,

"When you see them pray, you will look to him and think they are better than you. When they fast your fast will not compare to their fasting. They will recite Qur'an very well, but it will never reach below their throats, and they will leave the deen like the arrow from the bow."

Imaam Ali said,

"I heard the Messenger (saw) say, "There will be people whose recitation cannot be compared to anyone else, it will be the best. Whose salat cannot be compared to anyone else, it will be the best. Their fasting cannot be compared to anyone else, it will be the best. They will recite the Qur'an, thinking that it is an evidence for them, but it will be an evidence against them. They will leave the deen like the arrow leaves from the bow. Their sign is that their leader will have only upper arms, and the top of the arms will be like small nipples. They will have (strong) arms like the chests of women."

Al Mu'tazilah

The Mu'tazilah came to be so called on account of their separation from the Ahl us-Sunnah wal Jama'ah. This separation came about due to the following circumstances;

The members of the Muslim community were in disagreement over the question of how to classify a person who has committed a major sin. Some of them said, *"Such people are believers, to the extent of the eemaan they still possess."* There were also some who said, *"No! They are unbelievers."* Then along came Wasil ibn 'Ata' (d.132h) with a third opinion on the issue. He parted company with the Muslims, and separated himself off from the believers, for he said, *"Those who commit major sins are neither believers nor unbelievers. They have a status between the two statuses (manzil bayna manzilatayn)."*

They acquired this name on account of their separation from the council convened by al-Imaam Hasan al-Basri. As he (Wasil ibn 'Ata) walked past them, al-Hasan remarked, *"These people are Mu'tazilah (a bunch of separatists)!"* And so it came about that this nickname stuck to them.

Al-Maaturidiyyah

Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud Abu Mansur al-Maaturidi al-Hanafi (d.333h) was from Samarkand and compiled all the Fiqh of Imaam Abu Hanifah. The majority of people today who claim to ascribe to the Hanafi school of thought also ascribe to the Maaturidi school of belief and consequently the majority of people from the Indian Subcontinent follow the 'Aqeedah of Imaam Maaturidi.

Al-Ash'ariyyah

These are those who claim to follow the 'Aqeedah of Imaam Abu Hasan Al-Ash'ari Al-Yamani (d.324h). Imaam Al-Ash'ari was born in in Basra and studied here before moving on to Baghdad where he spent most of his life. For 40 years of his life, Imaam Al-Ash'ari was a vehement mu'tazilah; then he spent a portion of his life upon the way of ta'weel which the contemporary Ash'ariyyah hold onto. However, for the last 5 years of his life, Imaam Ash'ari recanted his old views

and became from Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah penning the noble work *Al-Ibaanah an-Usool Ad-Diyaanah*, wherein he refutes his previous heretical beliefs. Despite this work, most of the modern day Ash'arriyyah⁹² have become partisan to their beliefs and have remained upon the understandings of Imaam Al-Ash'ari before he became from Ahl us-Sunnah wal Jama'ah.

Shi'ah Raafidah

As-Shi'ah, Ar-Raafidhiyyah also known today as the Ja'faries, Imaamiyyah⁹³ and Ithna-Ashariyyahs (Twelve-ers) are not the same as the Shi'ah at the time of Imaam Ali. They actual follow the ideas and teachings of someone called Abdullah ibn Saba'.

Abdullah bin Saba' was a Jew of San'a in Yemen. His mother was called Sauda'. Abul Hassan Ash'ari comments about him,

"This Abdullah bin Saba' was a Jew. He nurtured an intense rage in his heart against the new faith which had squelched the Jewish

⁹² The modern day Ash'aris and the Maaturidis have a lot in common in terms of their understanding of 'Ilm ul-Kalaam. There is no evidence that Imaam Abu Hasan al-Ash'ari ever met Imaam Maaturidi, however evidence can be found in the two sheikhs book that they knew of and would other refute each other.

⁹³ It is pertinent to mention the true beliefs of this deviated sect to make apparent to the lay person the real views they hold on a number of issues. They believe that all of the Companions of the Prophet (saw) reneged and became apostates except three. They claim that Qur'an no longer exists in its original shape. The companions of the Prophet introduced changes in it. Therefore the Qur'an and the traditions attributed to the Prophet are not reliable. They also claim that there is a special clause in the Quran about the Imaamat of Hadhrat Ali which had been deleted by companions of the Prophet. They are anxiously awaiting the arrival of an Imaam called Mehdi, who has been shackled up in a hole for the past 1000 years, who will teach them the Shariah. They make 'al-La'n', cursing upon the companions, and the Umm ul-Mu'mineen (A'iesha and Hafsa (ra)). They believe in calculated lying or dissemination (*at-Taqiyyah*) to protect their views and they practise Mut'ah, wherein they enter time-limited contracts of 'marriage' which can last from one minute to however long one pleases.

domination and over-lordship of the Arabs of Madina and Hijaz. He embraced Islaam during the reign of Hadhrat Uthman. He traveled through the cities of Hijaz, also visiting Basra, Kufa, and Syria. Wherever he went, he tried his best to bring round the half-witted people of that area to his point of view. But he could not realize his impeachable intentions. He left for Egypt and became a permanent resident there. He launched his campaign to disenchant people with their faith by cosmeticizing his vicious designs as elegant and palatable realities. He found the climate of Egyptian opinion highly congenial for the realization of his scurvy intentions. His pet line of reasoning ran into the following grooves, "I am really surprised by your attitude. You attest to the return of Christ, son of Maryam, to the world, but you deny the return of Muhammad to this world!" He kept on hammering his point of view into the minds of people until some weak persons fell into his trap and started believing in the notion of the Prophet's return. The second sickness he spread among the people was that each Prophet has an executor or a representative who executes his will. The most cruel person is he who tries to prevent the implementation of his will. He would say, "O people! Uthman usurped the right of Hadhrat Ali and victimized and persecuted him. Therefore rise against (the verdict of the oppressors) and return the right to those who are its lawful claimants. Criticize your rulers and deny what they profess and stand for. In this way you will win over the hearts of people." Ibn Saba' had also organized a brigade of his friends and companions to propagate his heretic views and asked them to fan out in different cities. They also corresponded with one another to keep themselves abreast of the public opinion and their vicious campaigning finally claimed the life of the Caliph before whom the pages of the Book of Allah lay open at the time of his martyrdom."

There is not enough space in this book to expose the beliefs of this deviated sect. But in order to answer the dissension sowed amongst

the Ummah by some Sunni Muslims who desire to make reconciliation with the Shi'ah we advise them to beware and remember that Allah (swt) says,

“O ye who believe! Take not into your intimacy those outside your ranks: They will not fail to corrupt you. They only desire for you to suffer: Rank hatred has already appeared from their mouths: What their hearts conceal is far worse. We have made plain to you the Signs, if ye have wisdom.”⁹⁴

And He (swt) also said,

“If they had come out with you, they would not have added to your (strength) but only (made for) disorder, hurrying to and fro in your midst and sowing sedition among you, and there would have been some among you who would have listened to them. But Allah knoweth well those who do wrong.”⁹⁵

We leave you with a quote from a well known and respected Shi'ah scholar, Ni'matullah Al-Jazairi where he wrote in his book *Al-Anwar Al-Ni'maniyyah*,

⁹⁴ Al-Qur'an, Surah ale-Imraan, 3: 118

⁹⁵ Al-Qur'an, Surah at-Tawba, 9: 47

"We did not get together with them (the Sunnah) on Allah or the Prophet or the Imams, because they say, 'That their Lord sent Muhammad (saw) as a Prophet and his successors is Abu Bakr, and us, the Shi'ah, do not believe in this Lord Who made the successors of his Prophet Abu Bakr, that Lord is not our Lord and that Prophet is not our Prophet.'"



Disagreements Between the Sects

We have spoken in length about the existence of the different sects amongst the Muslim Ummah. Now we will discuss the issues which caused the initial disputes and the establishment of the sects. The following are the some of the areas of dispute arising between the Muslim sects;

Masadar ud-Deen, They differ about the sources for the Shar'iah
Sifaat Allah, They differ about the Attributes of Allah (swt)
At Tawheed, They differ in the understanding of the Oneness of Allah
Al Imaan, They differ in the understanding of the Islaamic Belief
Al Takfeer, They differ in the use of Takfeer (declaring disbelief)
Al Qadr, They differ in the issue of Divine Destiny
Al Qur'an, They differ on the issue of the nature of the Qur'an
Al Hadeeth, They differ in taking the narrations of Muhammad (saw)
Nabuwwah, They differ in the issue of the Prophethood
Al Sahabah, They differ in their understanding of the Companions
Al Istinaa', They differ in the issue of applying the title Shaheed

The Matters of Disagreement

At-Tawheed

The different sects take a number of different approaches to the understanding of Allah and Al-Tawheed;

Al-Tanzeeh, Elevation and purification of Allah (swt) from His creation

Al-Nafie, Negation of Allah's Attributes

Al-Tathbeet, Affirmation of Attributes without making interpretation

Al-Tashbeeh, Making similarity

Al-Tajseem/Tajseed, To embody Allah in the form of His creation

Al-Ta'teel, Ignoring & Dismantling the meanings

Al-Ta'weel, False Interpretation

Al-Tafweedh, Leaving the matter to Allah, saying "*Allah knows best*"

The matter of Tawheed is one of great importance in Islaam. A Muslim must have knowledge about Allah (swt) since Allah (swt) has said, "***And know that there is no god but Allah***". However, the first condition of Al-Tawheed is Al-'Ilm (knowledge), because you cannot testify to something without having knowledge about it. The differences with regards to Al-Tawheed among the sects are as follows;

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah

They believe that Al-Tawheed is, "*To submit, obey and worship Allah (swt) exclusively.*" And has the following two pillars⁹⁶;

1. *Kufr bit Taghout*, To declare disbelief in all of the False-gods
2. *Imaan Billah*, To declare belief in Allah (swt)

⁹⁶ Please refer to the leaflet entitled, "*The Pillars of Tawheed*", published by Muhajiroun publications

This embodies the principle in 'Ilm ul-Usul of *at-Takhliyyah qabl at-Tahliyyah*, to give up all Kufr, Shirk and Jahiliyyah before taking up Islaam. With regards to Al Tawheed the two pillars are to give up and reject all Taghout, before affirming Belief in Allah (swt).

- They believe believe in Allah (swt) exclusively in all His Names and Attributes without to redirect the Attributes of Allah (swt) to anyone else. For example to say Tony Blair is the legislator, or to say this Sheikh is Ar-Rahmaan etc. And without to join with Allah (swt) anything in His Attributes or Names, e.g. to say Tony Blair and Allah are the legislators
- They believe in *Tawheed Rububiyyah*, and *Tawheed Uluhiyyah*

In the matters pertaining to Allah (swt) actions and his Zaat (self) for example *al-Yadd*, hand, and *'Istiawah*, to sit over the Thrown, Ahl us-Sunnah Wal Jama'ah have;

- *Al-Tathbeet*, affirmation and *Al-Taflrweedh*, to leave its form to Allah (swt) but not the meaning
- *Al-Tanzeeh*, to elevate Allah (swt) from similarity to His creation

Summary - Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah follow the understanding of the Sahabah that Allah (swt) has Hands, and affirm the meaning without negation, nor do they make similarity to the creation or wonder how the Yad is (i.e. *kayfiyyah*). They cease at the text (*tathbeet*) and do not make *ta'weel* on these matters.

Al-Khawaarij

The Khawaarij are identical in the matter of understanding of Al-Tawheed to Ahl us-Sunnah wal Jama'ah. They have *Al-Tathbeet* and *Al-Taftwweedh*, to affirm the text and its meaning, but to leave the form to Allah (swt).

Al-Mu'tazilah

They have *Al-Tanzeeh*, Elevation, *Al-Nafie*, Negation and *Al-Ta'weel*, False Interpretation. They say that Allah (swt) cannot be like a man, or any of His creation. So they say Allah (swt) has no Attributes like our attributes, that no-one is above Him, nor below Him, nor beside Him i.e. He has no place. But in order to justify and maintain this elevation of Allah (swt) they have to nullify and make interpretation of the Attributes of Allah (swt).

For example they say that *al-Yadd* does not mean hand and Allah (swt) has no hand, nullifying the attribute of Allah (swt). Instead they say that *al-Yadd* is power. They are similar to the Ash'aris except that they negate all of Allah (swt) attributes.

Al-Maaturidiyyah

They have *Al-Tanzeeh* and *At-Taftwweedh*. They leave both the meaning of the Attributes and the form it takes to Allah (swt) saying, '*We do not know if Allah has a hand or not, nor how its form takes.*' Therefore, for example they conclude that *yadd* in Arabic has many meanings e.g. hands, power, support, but they leave the form and meaning of *yadd* to Allah (swt) and do not attribute any meaning to it.

They also make *Taftwweedh* on what to call the one who associates with Allah in only one of His Attributes. They believe that they are only sinful and can only become kafir if they associate in all of Allah's (swt) Attributes. This is because they say that Allah (swt) is an entity

encompassing all his 99 names, and each one individually is not Allah (swt).

Imaam Maaturidi commented on the issue of tawheed and 'Aqeedah, that it is:

"What the ration confirms and can be (left) independent with it (in confirmation), but the text (i.e. Qur'an and Sunnah) may confirm it."

On Tawheed, Imaam Maaturidi believed that Allah (swt) is *Ahad*, combining all His Attributes without separating any of them. That All 99 Names and Attributes come together to become Allah (swt). They don't accept *ta'weel*, but instead make *tafweedh*.

One of Imaam Maaturidi's students said, "*Allah - We will never call Him, except what He calls Himself. Allah is Wahid (unique) in all His Zaat, with no parts and no divisions. Allah is the Creator, and to be the Creator he must have Creation.*" From the last part of this statement, it is apparent that he reached the conclusion rationally, that if Allah is the Eternal Creator, he must have Creation to be present.

Al-Ash'ariyyah

Ash'aris make *Al-Ta'weel* and *Al-Tanzeeh*. Abu Hasan Al Ash'ari made *Ta'weel* and said that *Yadd* means power, and that anyone who says that it means hand is *kaafir* (non-Muslim). He reasoned that Allah does not have a hand because people have hands. So he made *Ta'weel* and consequently negated (*Al-Nafie*) the Attributes of Allah (swt). They also say that Allah (swt) 'Sees' and 'Hears' without eyes and ears. However, Al-Ash'ari admitted that, "*Yadd has only one literal meaning,*

that is hand," but he used his ration to find something suitable to be used for the meaning of *yadd* to be an Attribute of Allah⁹⁷ (swt).

Ar-Raafidah

They are identical in their understanding of this issue to the Ash'aris⁹⁸.

*Al-Imaan*⁹⁹

The issue of Imaan and its definition has caused much dispute between the Muslim Sects; from those that claim that Imaan is something that is just limited to the heart to those who say that Imaan is in the heart and in addition comprises sayings and actions. The Sects also disputed about whether Imaan is something fixed to those that said that Imaan increases and decreases. We will discuss in a little more detail this matter and present the views of the different Sects in this matter.

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah

They speak about Imaan as comprising the following three aspects; *Qalb*, Conviction in the heart, *Lisaan*, Testifying by the tongue and

⁹⁷ However, as we mentioned prior, Imaam Abu Hasan Al-Ash'ari retracted from these opinions, he repented and left them. He was Mu'tazilah for 40 years, and whilst on this he attacked Abu Mansoor Al-Maaturidi, and then for 5 years he was Ash'ari, and then he left all of his past opinions and followed Ahl us-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah. He declared publically that he recanted all of his previous opinions, and his students began to fight over that after him. After a period of time, many of them also left Ash'ariyyah and followed Ahl us-Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah.

⁹⁸ There is an additional sect of Islaam known as Al-Jahamis. We have not included them in this treatise. However, they were established by Imaam Jahm bin Safwan (d.128h), who said, "*The Qur'an is Creation, and Allah has no Sifaat.*" He also denied the eternity of Hell and Paradise. Because of this most Muslims labelled them as heretics and made takfeer against them (except the Murji's). It is important to note that because of his beliefs, he was executed.

⁹⁹ Please refer to Kitaab al-Tawheed by Sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammed for a more detailed exposition about Imaan

A'mal al-Iraadie, Practising willingly. Therefore they believe that *Al-Imaan Qawol wal-'Amal*, Imaan is sayings and actions combined.

They also believe that Imaan is not rigid, but *al-Imaan Yazeed bil Taa'aat wal Yanqus bil ithm wal Ma'siyah*, increases with good deeds (performing the *fard* and the *mandoub*) and decreases with bad deeds (performing the *haram* and *makrouh*). They also believe in the *Takfeer* negating the *Imaan* by any apparent *Kufr* (sayings, actions or belief). They worship Allah (swt) by making *takfeer* and purifying the camp of Tawheed from those who make *Kufr* and lie upon Allah (swt).

It is recorded in Saheeh Bukhari that Zaid ibn Thaabit said about the ayat, ***"The Believers are those who, when Allah is mentioned, feel a tremor in their hearts, and when they hear His signs rehearsed, their Imaan increases, and put (all) their trust in their Lord."***¹⁰⁰

"That this means Imaan increases and decreases."

In a Hadith narrated in Saheeh Muslim and collected in the Musannaf of Abu Bakr Abdullah ibn Muhammad¹⁰¹, Volume 7, page 189, Hadith no 35,211,

"I heard Abu Ka'ib say that Hassan Ibn Ali said that the Messenger Muhammad (saw) said, 'The Imaan is not a decoration or wish, Imaan is what is settled in the Qalb (heart and mind) and confirmed by action'".

Moreover Imaam al-Zarrie¹⁰² in his Hashiyaat Ibnu Qayyum (the index of Ibnu Qayyim) quotes Ibnu Majah from Imam Ali (ra) that the Messenger Muhammad (saw) said:

¹⁰⁰ Al-Qur'an, Surah al-Anfaal, 8: 2

¹⁰¹ Also known as Ibnu Abi Sheeba, born 139h and died 235h

¹⁰² Imaam Abu Bakr az-Zarrie born 691h and died 751h

"Imaan is conviction or knowledge in the heart, testifying by the tongue and acting upon the pillars of the actions."

In the same work, Imam az-Zarrie states,

*"Imam al-Humaridie said that Ahl-Sunnah say Imaan is speech and actions. The Murji'a say Imaan is the sayings. The Jahami's say Imaan is belief (alone)."*¹⁰³

Imaam Al-Qurtubie said in his *Tafseer* (explanation),

"Imaan is salaah as it requires niyyah (intention), sayings and action. People used to pray towards Jerusalem but then Allah changed the Qiblah (direction of prayer) and they thought that their salaah before was wasted (invalid)."

Imaam Maalik said,

"Those who say, 'Salat is not eemaan' are Murji'i (those who separate eemaan from action i.e. they are misguided)."

It is narrated that Imaam Bukhaari said,

"Al-Imaan is sayings and action that increases (by good deeds) and decreases (by bad deeds)."

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah therefore have *Al-Talaazum*, matching what is in their hearts (Imaan) with what is apparent in their sayings and actions (Imaan).

¹⁰³ *Imaam az-Zarrie, Hashiyaat Ibn Qayyim, Vol 12, pg. 294*

Al-Khawaarij

The Khawaarij are of the opinion that Imaan is sayings and actions as Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah claim. However they say that Imaan can only increase and does not decrease¹⁰⁴. They believe that Imaan is negated by any of the *Kabaa'ir* (major *haram* deeds).

The first people that the Khawaarij declared *kuffar* were the Sahabah at the time of Imaam Ali, when the fitnah occurred and they went to Abu Musa Al Ash'ari for arbitration. Citing that it is haraam to go to man to arbitrate when Allah (swt) has decreed His Decree through the Qur'an.

Al-Mu'tazilah

They are similar to Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah since they say that Imaan is sayings and actions, but they say that if someone commits big sin then they are not Muslim, but neither are they Kaafir as they say the Shahadah. They do Tafweedh and leave the matter to Allah. Because they say that it is not for us to judge but we leave it to Allah (swt), they are known as *Murji'ah*, those that do not apply the Hukm, but 'return' the matter to Allah (swt).

Al-Maaturidiyyah

They say that, "*Imaan is believing in the heart only, it does not increase and does not decrease and it is not allowed to make exception to that, Islaam and Imaan are synonymous.*"

¹⁰⁴ Imaam Maalik was initially of the opinion that Imaan increased but did not decrease. However, he used to believe that if you do haram, that your Imaan escapes your body and rises above your head whilst the sin is being performed (based upon a saheeh hadith). Therefore he did not pronounce takfeer on the *Kabaa'ir*. However, it has been reported that he (Imaam Maalik) changed this opinion later and what is established from him is that he is from Ahl Sunnah Wal Jama'ah.

They are Murji'ah because they separate Imaan from actions and they say that Imaan is rigid. But they are like Ahl ul-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah in that they say that Imaan and Islaam are synonymous.

Al-Ash'ariyyah

The Ash'ariyyah say that, "*Al-Imaan is in the heart, and sayings and actions are a supplementary condition.*" They say that Imaan will never increase nor decrease, but rather it is rigid. So they too are Murji'ah in the same way the Maaturidiyyah are.

At-Takfeer

The matter of Takfeer, or declaring people apostate because of their sayings or actions, has become more famous because of its use by the Jihadis of today, in particular the group Al-Qa'eda, who declare the rulers to be apostates¹⁰⁵ from Islaam due to their clear, open and arrogant acting and ruling by Kufr in opposition to the rules of Islaam. However, amongst the Muslim sects there are differences as to the role Takfeer plays and when it can be called upon for use.

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah

They believe that Takfeer is the Haq (Right) of Allah and it is purification and protection of ones' own Tawheed. Takfeer ensures that the Right's of Allah (swt) are protected and guarantees that the boundaries of Islaam are not overstepped. They make Takfeer¹⁰⁶ on those who declare open Kufr and do not have the preventions of takfeer upon them¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁵ Please read, "*The Six Reasons why all the Rulers are Kaafir*", Ash-Shari'ah Magazine (Muhajiroun Publications) Vol 1 Pg. 13

¹⁰⁶ Please refer to "*An Introduction to Takfeer*", by Muhajiroun Publications

¹⁰⁷ Broadly speaking, the Preventions of Takfeer encompass four aspects; 1. *Jahl*, Ignorance, 2. *Error and Mistakes*, 3. *Duress* and 4. *Ta'weel*, Interpretation. Please refer to the leaflet, "*The Preventions of making Takfeer*" by Muhajiroun Publications for further clarification and explanation.

Al-Khawaarij

Al-Khawaarij are similar to the view of Ahl as-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah and they make takfeer. However, they go to the extreme of making takfeer because of Major sin.

Al-Mu'tazilah

They make Tafweedh and do not make takfeer.

Al-Maaturidiyyah

They are similar to Al-Mu'tazilah and make tafweedh.

Al-Ash'ariyyah

They are similar to Al-Mu'tazilah and make tafweedh.

Shi'a Raafidiyyah

They are similar to Al-Mu'tazilah and make tafweedh.

Al-Qadr

The belief in Al-Qadr predestination i.e. Destiny is one of the aspect of Tawheed. Al-Qadr is the belief that everything that happens is from the Knowledge, Will, and Power of Allah (swt). On the issue of Al-Qadr, the Muslim Sects are divided into one of three,

1. *Al-Qadariyyah*¹⁰⁸ - *They claim that the person has a will and power independent of Allah's Will and Power*

¹⁰⁸ They are those who claim that they possess in full the capacity to act, free will, and effective power. They consider that they hold in their grasp the ability to do good and evil, avoid harm and obtain benefit, obey and disobey, and be guided or misguided. They claim that human beings retain full initiative, without any priority in Allah's will for their acts, nor even in His knowledge of them. Their doctrine is similar to that of Zoroastrians and Christians. The originate from `Amr ibn `Ubayd Abu `Uthman al-Basri (d.144h), who walked out of the teaching circle of al-Hasan al-Basri.

2. Al-Jabriyyah – *They claim that the person is forced to do whatever his actions and that he has no power or will of his own*
3. Ahl us-Sunnah – *They claim that everything that happens is from the Knowledge, Will, and Power of Allah (swt)*

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah

They believe that our actions are creations of Allah (swt). We believe that Man has the will and wish to do or not to do, and Allah (swt) has Will and Wish Nothing that Man does is without the Will and Wish of Allah (swt) since Allah (swt) has said in the explicit text, ***"I created you and your actions."***

Al-Khawaarij

They believe that everything that Allah has destined, must be believed in, good or bad. Man has a choice as to what to do, but Allah knows what you will choose. They have the same belief as far as Qadr to Ahl us-Sunnah.

Al-Mu'tazilah

They follow the line of al-Qadariyyah and hence are of them saying, *"Allah creates us, but man creates his actions. Allah has nothing to do with our actions."*

Al-Maaturidiyyah

Same as Ahl Al Sunnah.

Al-Ash'ari

They say that there are two arenas for man's actions, one that is within his control, and one that is out of their control (i.e. under the control of Allah). They therefore have elements of the Jabiriyyah way of thought.

Al-Masaadar ud-Deen

The Muslim sects also disagree about which sources of revelation they take for the basis of Islaam.

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah

Ahl us-Sunnah say that the sources of the Deen are the Qur'an and the Sunnah according to the understanding of the Sahabah. They also include the Ijma' of the Sahabah as evidence.

Al-Khawaarij

The Khawaarij has a similar understanding to Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah.

Al-Mu'tazilah

For the Mu'tazilah, al-'Aql or the ration is the primary source then the Qur'an and the Sunnah Mutawaatir only. They do not take any Hadith Ahad whether in actions or 'Aqeedah.

Al-Maaturidiyyah

For Maturidis, ration is the source of the Deen. They say that one must use ration to prove that the Qur'an is the inimitable Word of Allah and from this it becomes a source of evidence. They continue to use the ration and by this they say that the Sunnah is therefore evidence as well. They believe that the matters of 'Aqeedah (belief) are separate to those of Shari'ah (Laws pertaining to life) and so put separate conditions as to the evidences that can be used for each. For example, they say that the Hadith Ahad Saheeh (correct hadith that are single narrations) cannot be used for 'Aqeedah since the 'Aqeedah must be based on Daleel Qat'ie (undisputable evidence) but these ahadith can be used for Shari'ah.

Al-Ash'ariyyah

Similarly, for the Ash'aris ration is the Source of Deen and then the Qur'an and the Sunnah. They too separate 'Aqeedah and Shari'ah. They claim that the Qur'an is *Kalaam ul-Allah* (words of Allah) but not *Haqiqi* (in reality). This will be explained further on.

Shi'ah Raafidiyyah

In a similar way to the Ash'aris and the Maaturidis, the Shi'ah take Ration as the primary source for the Deen, then the Qur'an (on the understanding of the Ahl al-Bait) and the sayings of Ahl al-Bait.

However, in reality, the whole Shi'ah deen is based upon spurious *riwayaat* (reports) attributed to Imaam Ali, Imaam Ja'far as-Saadiq, Imaam Hasan al-Askari and Imaam Baqir and they are free from the lies and accusations of the Raafidis.

Qur'an

The different Muslim sects also differ in regards to the Qur'an whether it is *Kalaam ul-Allah* Words of Allah or *Makhlouq* Creation of Allah.

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah

Ahl us Sunnah believe that the Qur'an is the Word of Allah *Haqiqi* in reality and is audible and recitable. It is the Word by meaning and wording of Allah (swt).

It is reported in Saheeh Bukhari that the Prophet (saw) said,

"Whenever you read any letter (harf) of Al-Faatihah or the beginning of Al-Baqarah you get reward for it. 'Alif Laam Meem' is not one harf, rather Alif is one harf, Laam is one harf, and Meem is one harf."

Allah's Voice and Words are both audible and were heard by Jibrael, Adam and Muhammad (saw). Allah (swt) said to Musa (as),

*"So listen to what I say to you. Verily! I am Allah! None has the right to be worshipped but I, so worship me and perform prayers for my remembrance."*¹⁰⁹

Musa is known in Shari'ah as *Kaleem-Ullah* (the one whom Allah spoke to) because he (as) actually heard the Words of Allah and was not only inspired in his heart like other Prophets were. The fact that he heard Allah's Voice is proof that Allah's words are audible with a tune that we can hear.

And Allah (swt) also said, *"We called (nada) Ibrahim..."* and in another ayah, He said, *"We called Musa from the sacred mountain and ordered him to go to Phir'awn who became Taghi."*

Furthermore, *Al-Nida* in the Arabic language is a call to people in a very sharp tune. We do not use the verb *nida* for anything that has no tune whether real or metaphoric.

Moreover Allah said that he will call the people on the Day of Judgement and ask, *"Where are those who you took as partners beside Allah?"*

It is recorded in Sahih Bukhari, section entitled Kitaab ut-Tawheed, that,

"Whenever Allah likes a servant, He calls Jibreel (as) and says to him, 'I love so and so, so love him.'"

¹⁰⁹ Al-Qur'an, Surah Taa-Ha, 20: 13 - 14

It is narrated from Jaabir ibn Abdullah from Abdullah ibn Unais that,

"I heard the Messenger of Allah (saw) saying, "On the Day of Judgement, Allah will call the people with a tune and the people will hear Him (and He will) say 'I am the supreme King.'"

Sheikh ul-Islam, Ibn Taymiyyah said,

"Nobody claimed that Allah did not speak with a tune except Ibn Kilaab and his followers."

It is reported from Abdullah ibn Ahmad ibn Hanbal in the book, Kitaab us-Sunnah that,

"My father (Imaam Ahmed) quoted Ibn Mas'ud saying, 'Whenever Allah speaks, his Voice will have a tune like the metal chain dragged over the marble'. Only the Jahamies deny it and my father said those Jahamies are Kuffar. Whoever claims that Allah does not speak is a Kaafir. And my father also said, 'We repeat the hadith as it is, and we repeat what the people said as we heard it.' I then said to my father: 'People say that Allah does not speak with tune.' He said, 'O my son! They are Jahamie Zindeeq (heretics). They always deceive the people.'"

Imaam Al-Khallal said,

"I heard Imaam Abdul Wahhab say, 'Whoever says that Allah speaks without tune is a Jahamie and an enemy of Allah.'"

Sheikh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah quoted Imaam Abu Mansoor Muhammad ibn Ahmed saying,

"My Madhab, the Madhab of Shafi'ee, and the Fuqaha of the Ahnaaf (those who follow Abu Hanifah) say that the Kalaam of Allah is not created and whoever says it is created is Kafir. The Qur'an was carried by Jibreel who heard it from Allah, the Prophet (saw) heard it from Jibreel, and the Sahabah heard it from Rasulullah, and that is what we recite today. It is memorised in our hearts and is audible with tune."

Imaam Ahmad ibn Hanbal said,

"Whoever says that the kalaam of Allah is creation, he is Kaafir and the Curse of Allah and all the people is on him."

Imaam Shafi'ee said,

"Know that the entire Qur'an is the Words of Allah, its letters and its meaning, nothing in the Qur'an is not His word."

Al-Khawaarij

They are similar to Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah as above.

Al-Mu'tazilah

The same as with Ash'aris.

Al-Maturidiyyah

For Maturidis, the Qur'an is the inner word of Allah, the word that Allah (swt) want to See. They say it is not audible but is recitable. The Maturidis say,

"Al-Qur'an is the Word of Allah nafsi, it is not audible, but is recitable. What you read and what you hear is creation."

Abu Mansoor Al-Maturidi said,

"Al Qur'an is not the word of Allah Haqiqie (explicitly). It is the word of Allah implicitly and cannot be heard. We can hear what is on behalf of it. Therefore any letters in the Qur'an today is creation because man recited it."

Al-Ash'ari

For Ash'aris, the Qur'an is not audible nor recitable, and is the Word of Allah by meaning but is on the wording of Jibreel (as). They say,

"Al Qur'an is the Word of Allah that is not created. But Jibreel heard it from Allah, and what Muhammad (saw) heard was the words of Jibreel, and the letters and tune of Jibreel (as)."

Shi'ah Raafidah

They follow an understanding similar to above.

Hadith

The different Muslim sects also differ regarding the status of the Hadith (the sayings of the Messenger Muhammad (saw)) in the Deen. Some of the sects divide the Islamic Deen into 'Aqeedah and Shari'ah and say baselessly that the subject matter of 'Aqeedah requires *daleel qat'ie* (undisputable evidences) which for them include only the Qur'an and the *Hadith Mutawaatir* (numerous chains of narrators, often >3). For the Shar'iah, they say that in addition to the two said adillah, they can also use the *Hadith Ahad* (single chains of narrators). Others, like the Mu'tazilah reject this and say that only the Hadith Mutawaatir can be taken for all matters of Deen.

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah believe that any Hadith Saheeh is evidence for all matters. They do not differentiate between the

'Aqeedah and the Shar'iah and say that all matters of Deen can be taken from either the *Hadith Ahad* or *Mutawaatir*.

Al-Khawaarij

They are similar to Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah as above.

Al-Mu'tazilah

They do not accept the Hadith Ahad in any matter, whether Aqeedah or Shari'ah.

Al-Maaturidiyyah

They differentiate between the 'Aqeedah and the Shar'iah and consequently only take the Hadith Ahad as a source evidence in Fiqh, but not in the 'Aqeedah.

Al-Ash'arriyah

They are similar to Al-Maaturidiyyah as above.

Shi'ah Raafidiyyah

They are similar to Al-Maaturidiyyah as above.

Sahabah

The Muslim sects also disagreed about the status of the Sahabah (companions) of the Prophet Muhammad (saw). Some of the sects went to the extreme of declaring the Sahabah apostates, others, led by inaccuracies and biases of the books of history, singled out and highlighted the mistakes of individual Sahabi. We will provide the different understandings of each of the Muslims sects as follows,

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah believe that all the Sahabah are trustworthy, and their opinions are *Hujjah* (guidance) for us, binding

upon us and we do not argue nor enter into their disputes since it is a matter of Haq and Ijtihad between themselves. There are many texts both in the Qur'an and ahadiths that testify to the Sahabah, the strength of their Imaan and Allah's love of them,

Allah (swt) says,

*"The Vanguard (of Islaam) - the first of those who forsook (their homes) and those who gave them aid (i.e. the Muhajireen and the Ansaar) and also those who follow them in good deeds, Allah is well pleased with them and they with Allah. And Allah has made ready with them gardens underneath which rivers flow and that will be their abode forever eternally, this is the supreme triumph."*¹¹⁰

And Allah (swt) also says,

*"And indeed Allah (swt) is pleased with the Believers who pledged allegiance to you under the tree because Allah knows what is inside their hearts and He sent tranquillity upon them."*¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Al-Qur'an, Surah at-Tawba, 9: 100

¹¹¹ Al-Qur'an - Surah al-Fath, 48 : 18

And Allah (swt) further says,

“Whoever contradicts with the Messenger after the guidance comes and follows a path different to that of the Believers (his Companions), will go to hellfire.”¹¹²

Abdullah ibn Masoud (ra) narrated that the Prophet (saw) said,

“The best of my nation is the one with me now.”

It is recorded in Bukhari and Muslim, that Abu Saeed al Khudri narrated that the Prophet (saw) said,

“Do not curse or rebuke my companions. By Allah if one of you would spend as much gold as would weigh the mountain of Uhud, he would not be rewarded equal to the one given to my companions where one of them just gave a handful of wheat.”

It is recorded in Tirmidhi that the Messenger (saw) said,

“Allah! Allah! On my Companions do not direct controversy, whoever loved them, loved me, and whoever loathed them, loathed me, and whoever insults them, insults me, and whoever insults me insults Allah, and Allah may then punish them.”

It is reported on the authority of Ibn Abbas, that the Messenger Muhammad (saw) said,

¹¹² Al-Qur'an, Surah an-Nisaa', 4: 115

"Be careful from cursing any of the Sahabah. May be Allah will drag you to Jahanam on your faces (because of this)."

It is reported that Muhammad (saw) also said,

"Do not curse or swear against any of the Sahabah. One of their actions in one hour is better than all of your actions throughout your whole life."

Al-Khawaarij

The Khawaarij are similar to Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah and give their Hujjah to the Sahabah and follow them.

Al-Mu'tazilah

As with the Ash'aris.

Al-Maaturidiyyah

As with Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah. However, they do not take Hadith Mawqouf (the sayings and understanding of the Sahabah).

Al-Ash'ariyyah

Some of the Ash'ariyyah (e.g. Habashies) permit and attack the Sahabah in a similar vein to the Raafidah. They single out in particular Umm al-Mu'mineen 'Aisha, Mu'awiyah, Khalid bin Waleed and Uthman (ra).

Shi'a Raafidah

Despite their claiming otherwise (using *Taqiyyah* (dissemulation)), it is part of the Shi'a Raafidah belief that all of the Sahabah after the Messenger Muhammad (saw) became apostates and reneged on his (saw) teachings except three. There is no basis for this belief in any text of Qur'an nor Sunnah, rather the opposite is true, *"Allah (swt) is*

pleased with them." We will quote to you two respected Shi'ah 'Ulema and the views they hold,

"People became apostates after the death of the Prophet (saw), except for three people; Miqdad Ibn Aswad, Abu Dharr Ghifari and Salmaan Farsi. Abu Bakr and Omar did not repent before they parted the world. In fact, they did not even mention what they had done to Ali. So may Allah, His Angels and all of mankind curse them!"¹¹³

The Shi'ite scholar of Hadith, Ni'matullah Jaza'irie¹¹⁴ writes,

"The Shi'ah Imaamiyyah are of the opinion that the Khilafah of Hazrat Ali is by nassi jalli (clear text) and all the Sahabah are Kaafirs, and continue to slander them. They (shias) believe in the Imaamah of Ja'far as-Saadiq, and his sinless offspring. The author of this book belongs to this group and only this sect is successful and saved (from jahannum). Abe Ja'far (Imaam Baqir) says that after Rasulullah, all the Sahabah (may Allah be pleased with them and curse those who curse the sahabah) became Murtid (turn apostate) apart from these; Miqdad Bin Aswad, Abu Dhar al-Ghafari and Salaman Farsi¹¹⁵. They refused to make Bay'ah (allegiance) to Abu Bakr, until they called Amirul Momineen (Imaam Ali)."

It is evident from the Raafidi sources that they believe all the *Ashaab al-Kareem* of the Messenger Muhammad (saw) became disbelievers since they did not allow Imaam Ali to be the Caliph.

Khilafah

On the issue of Khilafah, there is no dispute amongst the sects that it is a matter that is *fard* (an obligation) on the Believers. However, the

¹¹³ Muhammad bin Yaqoob al-Kulaini, Furu' Ul-Kaafi, Kitab ul-Rauda 115

¹¹⁴ Jaza'iri, Anwaar Numaaniyyah, Vol 2, pg. 245

¹¹⁵ Found in Usul al-Kaafi, Vol 2, Raudah Kaafi, pg. 246

Shi'ah Raafidah stipulate a condition that their Imaam Mehdi (who has been hiding in a hole from them for the past 1000 years) is its inheritor.

Signs of Prophethood

The Muslim sects differ as to whether the Messenger Muhammad (saw) was sent with additional *mu'jizaat* (miracles) as proof for his Prophethood other than the Qur'an.

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah

Ahl us Sunnah believe that there are miracles and signs of Prophethood other than the Qur'an.

Al-Khawaarij

Have a similar view as above.

Other Sects

They (the Mu'tazilah, Asharis, Maaturidiyyah and the Shi'ah) believe that the only proof of Prophethood is the miracle of the ayah of the Qur'an that no-one can write anything similar.

Al-Shahaadah

The Muslim Sects also differ about whether it is permissible to make witness that so and so is in Jannah or whether that person is in Jahanam. They therefore also disagree on whether it is allowed to testify that that person is *Shaheed* (martyr in the way of Allah and therefore promised Jannah) or not.

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah

They do not testify that anyone is in Jannah, except those that Allah (swt) have testified already to us. For those who are alive we do not testify whether they are going to Hellfire or Jannah. But when they

die, we do not testify that they are guaranteed Jannah. Therefore, we do not also say so and so is *Shaheed*. Instead, we say Inshaa-Allah he is Shaheed.

Other Sects

They (Mu'tazilah, Asharis, Maaturidiyyah and the Shi'ah) testify by the actions of people e.g. they would call the one performing a martyrdom operation and succeeding *Ash-Shaheed Fulaan* (so-and-so).

Al-Istinaa'

The Muslim Sects also differ about the matter regarding Istinaa'. We will present their views below.

Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah

They say Inshaa Allah, for example, '*He is shaheed Inshaa Allah*', or '*I am mu'min Inshaa Allah*', they do not praise themselves nor anyone else except those praised by Allah (swt).

Al-Khawaarij

They follow a similar understanding as above.

Other Sects

They (Mu'tazilah, Asharis, Maaturidiyyah and the Shi'ah) do not do as the Salaf and will say, "I am Mu'min", without to say inshaa Allah.

How to Measure who is from Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah

It is reported that Sufyan ibn 'Uyainah (d.197h) said,

"The Sunnah is ten. Whosoever accepts them has completed the Sunnah and whoever abandons anything from them has abandoned the Sunnah;

1. *They believe in the Qadr (that Allah created us and our actions)*
2. *They believe that Abu Bakr first then Umar (as Khulafaa)*
3. *They believe in the Al Hawd*
4. *They believe in the the Shafa'ah on the Day of Judgment*
5. *They believe in the the Mizaan*
6. *They believe in the Siraat*
7. *They believe that the Imaan is sayings and actions,*
8. *They believe that the Qur'an is the word of Allah (literal, audible and recitable*
9. *They believe in the Punishment of the Grave*
10. *They believe in the resurrection on the Day of Resurrection"*

It has also been said by the scholars of the Salaf when asked,

"How do we know someone from Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah?"
They replied, "If they have the following characteristics,

1. *He never gives up the Jama'ah*
2. *He never swears at the Sahabah*
3. *He never rises the sword against the Ummah*
4. *And does not disbelieve in the Qadr*
5. *Does not have doubt that the Imaan is sayings and actions*
6. *He does not make any Irja'*
7. *And he will never stop praying for someone who dies from Ahl al Qiblah*
8. *And he does not give up wiping the socks."*



CHAPTER 8

Conclusions

We have presented to you in this short treatise a brief synopsis of the attributes of Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah and their understanding in terms of 'Aqeedah. It is important to reiterate once again that one does not become of Ahl us Sunnah wal-Jama'ah simply by calling oneself by the title, nor by calling oneself 'Salafi' or by calling oneself by any other name. Nor is being from Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah being part of an elite club. One becomes Ahl us Sunnah wal Jama'ah if one follows the *Nahj us-Salaf* the path of the pious predecessors.

As the great Sahabi Abdullah Ibn Masoud has said,

"The Jama'ah is what matches with the obedience to Allah (swt) even if you are a single person."

And what is reiterated by Sheikh ul-Islaam ibnu Taymiyyah,

*"They are called Ahl us-Sunnah because they always follow the Shari'ah, and Jama'ah because they are united together without even meeting."*¹¹⁶

¹¹⁶ *Ibn Taymiyyah, Majmoua' al-Fattawa Vol 3 pg. 358*

It is also important to rebuff and refute the claims of those groups and individuals who incessantly argue saying that, *"It does not matter whether you are a Sufi, Salafi, Shi'a, Maaturidi or Asha'ri – What matters is that you work for the Khilafah and that studying this matter will cause sectarian divisions."* Firstly, it must be pointed out that these sectarian divisions exist because of differences in understanding of the divine texts and because of following one's whims and desires and not the understanding of the Sahabah. Consequently, studying the matter does not further the divisions, but makes one aware of what the different sects actually stand for. Secondly, since the Prophet (saw) and Allah (swt) have promised victory and success for those who follow the A'qeedah and actions of the Ahl Sunnah wal-Jama'ah both in this life and the Here After, it must subsequently be of a greater importance for those who really desire the return of the Khilafah to study these matters and implement the orders of the Prophet (saw) since Allah (swt) has said,

"Allah has promised those who amongst you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will certainly grant them succession to (the present rulers), and that He will grant them the authority to practise their Deen which He has chosen for them. And He will surely, give them in exchange a safe security after their fear (provided) they (believers) worship Me and do not associate with Me."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁷ Al-Qur'an, Surah an-Nur, 24: 55

In the above ayat, Allah (swt) has promised the victory and the inheritance of the earth to those who both have the correct belief and perform the correct actions in addition to not joining any partners with Allah (swt). Therefore, the one who sincerely desires the return of the Khilafah and the unity of the Ummah, must study their A'qeedah, rectifying any points of deviation, perform all the good deeds, including implementing the method the Messenger Muhammad (saw) used to establish the first Islamic State, and studying the matter of *Tawheed* (oneness of Allah) and *Shirk* (associating with Allah) so that he may stay clear from associating with Allah (swt) lest Allah (swt) reject all their deeds and actions. Ibn Abbas has said,

"They became Mushriks (idolators, non-Muslims) without even realising."

We pray to Allah (swt) that He (swt) accepts this work and records it for us on the Mizaan as good deeds that will benefit us in the Here After.

Wa aakhir ad-Dawaana anil Hamdulilahi Rab al-A'alameen.



APPENDIX 1

Imaam Ahmed bin Hanbal

He is Ahmed ibn Muhammad ibn Hanbal bin Hilal from Banu Shaybaan who descends from Ismail (as). He was born in 164^h and died 241^h in Baghdad, Iraq. His *Kunya* (nickname) was Abu Abdullah.

Titles

Imaam ul-Mihnah – The Leader during the Calamity

Qaamiul Bida'h – The Opposer of Innovation

Nasirudeen – The Supporter of the Deen

Imaam ul-Muhaditheen – The Imaam of Hadith

Imaam Ahl ul-Sunnah wal Jama'ah

His Teachers

It is reported that he had many *Shuyook*¹¹⁸, around 78 including Sheikh Muhammad bin Yazeed, Sheikh Yazeed ibn Haroon, Sheikh Isma'il ibnu Ulaiyah, Sheikh Ushaym ibn Basheer, Imaam Shafi'i, Imaam Zuhrie, Sheikh Abu Dawood.

¹¹⁸ *Shuyook* (pl. Sheikh) – Teacher, person from which a man takes all his Islaamic knowledge.

His Students

In his life he had many students including his own sons Abdullah and Saleh and his cousin, Ibn Ishaq Ibnu Hanbal, Imaam Muslim, Imaam Bukhari, Sheikh Abu Zara' Abu Dawood, Imaam Abu Haatib, Sheikh Abu Bakr.

His Studies

From his childhood he was keen to study Ilm ul-Hadith because of his mother who put him in a school with the two Shaykhs Ismail ibnu Ulaiya and Hushaym ibn Basheer where he learnt Uloom ul-Hadith, At 10 years he memorised the entire Qur'an and by the age of 15 he was Haafiz of approxiametly 100,000 Ahadith.

Imaam Ahmed studied, Ilm ul-Hadith, and managed to memorise 400,000 hadiths towards the end of his life. 200,000 of which were Saheeh (i.e. correct chains and attributable to Muhammad (saw)) and 200,000 was Da'eef (i.e. had defection in their chains and therefore not attributable to the Messenger Muhammad (saw))¹¹⁹.

His Usul

His usul was based upon the four agreed upon sources of general evidences, the Qur'an, Sunnah, Ijma' Sahabah and Qiyas as general evidences.

He adopted that any *amr* (command) from Allah is always *fard* (obligatory) unless evidence states otherwise. Therefore, if Allah (swt) and the Messenger (saw) said not to do any action then Imaam Ahmed

¹¹⁹ You may ask what was the need to memorise so many Da'eef hadith? It is important to remember that as Muslims we only follow what the Messenger Muhammad (saw) brought. Therefore, it is of importance to us to check and verify all the recorded sayings of him (saw). It is important to know which ahadith are Saheeh (correct) and those that are Da'eef (weak) so that when people come with opinions based upon these weak ahadith, the scholar can counter them and explain their defections.

would say that this action was Haraam unless indicated otherwise. However, it is reported that after he met and accompanied Imaam Maalik and then Imaam Shafi'i he changed this position and consequently, in the books of fiqh, Imaam Ahmed is found to have two opinions on almost every matter (see al-Mughni) except in 'Aqeedah.

What the Scholars say about Imaam Ahmed

Imaam Bishrul Haafie was a famous alim in Baghdad and was asked by one of his students why he didn't stand up and say what Imaam Ahmed said as Imaam Ahmed was correct in his stance. He said, *"If I stood the way he did, they would beat me and torture me like they tortured him. Verily he did not stand a normal standing, he stood the standing of Prophets who never compromised."*

Hammad ibnu Yahya reported that Imaam Shafi'i said, *"I left Iraq in full knowledge that there was nobody with more taqwa or more fiqh than Imaam Ahmed ibnu Hanbal."*

Imaam Darimie said, *"Nobody (before) was hafizul hadith (memoriser of hadith) and had black hair (i.e. young) except Imaam Ahmed."*

Imaam Abu Zara' said, *"Imaam Ahmed knew 400,000 hadiths and nobody ever accused him in his Deen i.e. he was steadfast."*

Imaam Yahya ibn Maeen and Sufyan ibnu Wakiyi' said, *"Imaam Ahmed is a mihnah (test) for any Alim. Whoever speaks bad about him, he is a Faasiq."*

Qutaybah likened Imaam Ahmed to Abu Bakr (ra) saying that, *"These were the two who at the time of testing did not compromise. Abu Bakr because of Harbul Ridda (war of Apostacy) and Imaam Ahmed in the time of the Mihnah."*

The Time of Mihnah for Imaam Ahmed

In the year 218^h, the Islaamic State for the first time began to adopt issues in the matter of *Furou' al-'Aqeedah* (the branches of belief). Making it incumbent upon the general people to follow it as a decree of the law¹²⁰. The Caliph Ma'mun¹²¹ adopted that the Qur'an was *Makhlooq* i.e. is the creation of Allah as opposed to *Kalaam ul-Allah* (the Speech of Allah) and wanted to impose it on the people by force. He announced, "*We are no longer going to accept Bid'ah in our Aqeedah, the greatest of which is those that say that the Qur'an is an attribute of God (i.e. the Speech of Allah).*"

In order to impose this view upon the people, he sent his Governor of Iraq, Ishaq ibn Ibraheem to Baghdad to make the issue of the Qur'an known and part of the curriculum of the day. They began to summon all of the ulema and would praise and elevate all those who agreed with their views. If any of the ulema disagreed with this view, they would be insulted, rejected and their testimony would not be taken as witness.

Immediately, upon hearing the news, Imaam Ahmed rejected this understanding. He gathered together over 3,500 different Alims, all of whom rejected the idea that the Qur'an is *Makhlooq*. However, when these Alims learnt that their jobs and that their witness would be in jeopardy by the state unless they changed their position, over 2,000 left the gathering, leaving only 1,500. The Caliph was not satisfied with this, and wanted all of the alims to follow his view. He began to

¹²⁰ Usually in the Islaamic State, the adoption of the ameer becomes binding on the people; if people do not listen, then the Caliph has a right to punish those that reject his authority. However, on matters of *Furou' al-'Aqeedah*, which are not related to the office of the Caliph i.e. to manage the affairs of the people, this will cause great Fitnah.

¹²¹ The Caliph at the time was of the Mu'tazila *Firqah* (School of Belief). Part of their belief which is similar to the A'sharies of today is that the 'Aql (mind) has a role to play in the Usul of the Deen.

withdraw state gifts to the scholars who disagreed with his position. Fearing for their wealth, it is narrated by Qutaybah that another 1,000 alims changed their opinion, leaving only 500 scholars with Imaam Ahmed.

Again, the Caliph was not satisfied with this and wanted all of their scholars to drop their opposition to the state. He began to impose *ta'zeer* (capital punishment) and imprisonment upon those who continued to disagree with him. Finally, out of the remaining 500, only 4 alims were left in the whole of Baghdad who remained steadfast on the correct belief¹²². Of these were, Imaam Ahmed ibn Hanbal, Sheikh Muhammad ibn Nuh, Imaan Ubaidullah al-Qawaririe and Sheikh Sujaddah ibnu Abdullah.

These four were then thrown into prison and the next day were summoned by the Governor. Imaam Qawaririe was asked his opinion regarding the Qur'an, he replied, *"Last night was very difficult for me [referring to the prison]. I say what the Amir ul-Mu'mineen says and may Allah forgive me."* The Governor then turned to Sujaddah and repeated his question. Sujaddah said, *"I think that Imaam Qawaririe took the permit of the sunnah of Ammar ibn Yaasir, and rasoolullah accepted from him. There is nothing wrong for me to accept the rukhsa of Rasoolullah (saw). In addition to this, my back has become red (from punishment)."* Therefore, only two A'lim amongst the initial 3,000 scholars were left not wishing to recant their view in this matter.

¹²² A valuable lesson is to be drawn here. The truth is the truth not because of numbers, supporters or personalities, but because of evidences and understanding. Imaam Ahmed and only a handful were with him in the understanding that the Qur'an was *Kalaam ul-Allah* as opposed to the majority who attested that the Qur'an was *Makhloq*. But as they followed the Qur'an and the Sunnah, they were greater and as we will see they were victorious over the majority.

As a result of this incident, Al-Ma'mun ordered to killing anyone who rejected that the Qur'an was created declaring them apostates, allowing them the statutory three days for repentance. The Caliph ordered for the *Shaykhain* (two scholars) to be taken to Tartous in Turkey. They were arrested, chained and dragged to the Caliph. However, on their way to the Caliph, al-Ma'mun passed away, and the *Shaykhain* were left in Ar-Riqah for 3 days until Mutassim assumed leadership. However, when al-Mu'tassim assumed the office of Caliph he too summoned them. On the way to the Caliph, Muhammad ibn Nuh passed away and Imaam Ahmed was left to face the Caliph alone.

Having seen how this issue developed, Al-Mu'tassim, realised that the ummah were beginning to take this matter seriously and were discussing it at almost every gathering. He feared that the more this matter was being dragged out, the more resistance he would face from the people. Therefore he had to break Imaam Ahmed's resolve by anyway means possible.

Al-Mu'tassim ordered Imaam Ahmed to be taken back to Baghdad. In the meantime he tried to convince the uncle of Imaam Ahmed, Ishaq, to speak to him explaining his state of affairs. Ishaq went to Imaam Ahmed and asked him why he was taking a difficult path for himself and not use the way of *Taqiyyah* (saying something by your tongue that is different to what you conceal in your heart). Imaam Ahmed replied with his famous statement,

"O my uncle! If the scholar speaks from his mouth what he hates by his heart and the ignorant does not know, how will truth prevail? How will the people in the future learn. If I were a prophet, I would know that Allah would send another prophet to correct the people. But I am not a prophet, and there is no prophet after rasoolullah

(saw). I am in a time where the U'lema sit back. Rather, I wish for them to kill me than to speak any falsehood."

Having kept to his stance, the Caliph decided that now Imaam Ahmed had become an apostate and needed to repent. He was placed in prison for a period totalling 28 months. During this time he wrote most of his works including al-Musnad Imaam Ahmed and was regularly taken to debate with the government scholars.

During his time in prison and under torture, Imaam Ahmed became famous in reciting a hadith. He quoted the Prophet Muhammad (saw) as saying, *"Some people from my ummah will face calamity the same as those faced by Banu Israel before them. Until they are cut from head to toe by swords."* And Imaam Ahmed would reply to this, *"I am ready!"* He became so famous in repeating this hadith that the Jews of Baghdad said, *"If Imaam Ahmed was present in the time of Bani Israel in the same way he is making a stand today, he would have become an Ayat (sign) for them."*

On one occasion he was brought before Ibn Abi Dawood, a government preacher¹²³, who said to Imaam Ahmed as he entered,

¹²³ Another lesson can be drawn here. If the Caliph or leader of the Muslims adopts in matters that are contradicting to the Islaamic texts, it is the scholars foremost duty to expose this and challenge the matter publically. The time of Mihnah for Imaam Ahmed teaches us that there will always be governmental scholars, those whose job is just to repeat parrot-fashion what the rulers say, not caring for what Allah and His Messenger have said. We offer the life of Imaam Ahmed as a lesson to the modern day Saudi Salafis and in particular to the Madhkhalis, who both claim to be adherents of Imaam Ahmed, that Imaam Ahmed rose against and publically championed people against the state and the rejection of their understandings and adoptions. However, there is no similitude between the Caliph Mu'tasim and the modern day *Tawagheet* like Fahd, Abdullah and the likes. One state who ruled by what Allah (swt) had revealed, and the other, obeying the laws and instructions of their leaders in America and the West. We ask the Madhkhalis and the Saudi Salafis, *"Had you existed in the time of Imaam Ahmed, would you be with Imaam Ahmed or against him? Would you have allied yourself with the government of*

"Here comes the enemy of Allah. The misguided. The enemy of the state. The enemy of the caliph. It is time for you to repent otherwise your head will be removed from your shoulders!" To this, Imaam Ahmed replied, *"My Lord is the one who gives life and takes life."*

Ibn Abi Dawood then began to quote the evidences including his own intellect to try and convince Imaam Ahmed of his opinions. However, Imaam Ahmed refuted all of his evidences using evidences solely based on the Qur'an. Ibn Abi Dawood became frustrated with this and shouted, *"How dare you quote Quranic evidences in front of me!"* Imaam Ahmed replied, *"If I do not assist myself with the Qur'an and Sunnah, what else can help me?"*. Ibn Abi Dawood replied, *"By your mind you fool (Gabi)"*. He was returned to prison and Imaam Ahmed continued to pray to Allah to give him strength not to compromise.

Still wanting to silence Imaam Ahmed, the Caliph, Al-Mu'tasim then sent Abdur-Rahman ibn Ishaq to him. Ibn Ishaq was a friend and companion of Imaam Shafi'e (a teacher of Imaam Ahmed) and he pleaded to Imaam Ahmed that if he just said what he didn't believe in his heart then he would be forgiven by Allah (swt). He was say, *"Imaam Shafi'e used to like you and respected you as being the most learned in Baghdad. Do not be left (to be called by the people) the one who died as a solitary apostate"*.

Having exhausted all avenues in terms of debate and discussion, the Caliph al-Mu'tasim became disheartened, deciding that it was now time for Imaam Ahmed to be lashed and punished for his stance. Upon hearing this Imaam Ahmed become worried – not for the lashing but because he used to use a rope to tie his clothes around his waist. This rope was very small and tight, and Imaam Ahmed feared it

that time, as you do today and pass fatawa that legitimise the position of the Leader despite their open contradiction to the Islaamic texts? If only you were to open your eyes to Islaam and follow the understanding of the Salafi!" May Allah guide us all.

would not withstand the lashes and therefore if he was lashed his clothes would fall and his *awrah* would be uncovered to the people.

Again, before they began the lashing, they asked Imaam Ahmed whether he agrees to what the Caliph says in terms of the creation of the Qur'an. Again, Imaam Ahmed was steadfast and replied that he says only what the Qur'an and Sunnah attest to. They then began to lash him.

Imaam Makhrizie reported that when they began to lash Imaam Ahmed, he said on his first lashing, "*Bismillah!*". On the second, "*There is no power except that of Allah (la howla wa quwa ta illa billah)*", and on the third lash, "*The Quran is the Word of God and is not Created*". On the fourth lash he said, "*Nothing will occur without Allah's decree,*" and then he fell unconscious. They continued to hit him until 39 lashes had elapsed.

When Imaam Ahmed regained consciousness, they threatened him again, checking his stance with regards to the Qur'an. Abi Dawood even offered to compromise saying that all he had to do was raise his hand in response to the question whether the Qur'an was created or not. However, Imaam Ahmed rejected all of their advances.

The people began to hear that Imaam Ahmed was being lashed and was still not compromising his views. They began to gather around the area in which Imaam Ahmed was being lashed, eager to see the outcome. Many of them began to follow what Imaam Ahmed believed as they felt a great Imaam would not sacrifice his life for something that was not correct. However, despite this growing support the lashing continued. As they began to lash him again, the rope that held Imaam Ahmed's clothes broke. Imaam Ahmed began to recite a Du'a to Allah (swt) to protect himself from his *awrah* being exposed.

Everybody expected Imaam Ahmed's clothes to fall, and despite the continued lashing, by Allah's Leave his clothes remained as they were. The people were astonished, and from the gathering people shouted to Imaam Ahmed asking what Du'a he read. Imaam Ahmed replied, *"I said. 'O my Lord! I ask You by Your Name that You fill Your Throne. If You know I am right do not uncover my awrah! O my Lord (answer me)!"*

Al-Mu'tasim became enraged and shouted, *"Be careful, O Ahmed! Why do you want to kill yourself? What has happened to you."* Imaam Ahmed replied, *"I will never compromise (this matter)! Kill me and let everyone say what I say, 'the Quran is the Word of Allah, it is not created.'"* Upon hearing this, an uprising started outside the palace of the Caliph, and more people began to come and gather in Baghdad. The Governor, Ishaq ibn Ibrahim shouted at Imaam Ahmed saying, *"How dare you! The caliph is speaking to you look to him (and give him respect)." Imaam Ahmed replied, "I am looking to him, but I am also looking for the angels to come and receive me."* And then he began to make supplication to Allah (swt) saying, *"O my Lord! I no longer can live with these people! O my Lord! Take your servant; for I am ready to meet you!"*

On hearing this, all the people in the gathering began to shout that the Qur'an is *Kallaamullah* and not created. Seeing that Imaam Ahmed's opinion was gaining sway amongst the masses, the Caliph sent out Imaam Ahmed's Uncle to tell the people that Imaam Ahmed would be released. Imaam Ahmed was eventually released but kept under house arrest i.e. people were not allowed to visit nor study from him. After a period of time al-Mu'tasim passed away.

Al-Wasiq Billah became the Caliph and again followed the Mu'tazilah school of belief like his forefathers. He arrested Imaam Ahmed and prevented people from entering and leaving his house. Eventually he exiled Imaam Ahmed from the people. Imaam Ahmed was kept like

this for a period of one and a half years until Wasiq Billah too passed out.

Al-Mutawwakil then assumed the Caliphate and decreed that the state no longer would punish those who adopted that the Qur'an is *Kallamullah* (the Speech of Allah). Allowing the people to choose what they wanted in this regard.

Following this great fitnah, Imaam Ahmed passed away in 241h in Baghdad. He succeeded all three Mu'tazilah Caliphs who wanted him to change his belief, and remains famous till this day because of this issue, whereas their names have faded away in the books of history. It is narrated by Imaam Baghawie and Imaam Kasbaanie that 800,000 men and 60,000 women attended his Janazah. And Imaam Al-Madeni narrates in addition to this that amongst them were 20,000 from *Ahl-Dhimma* (Jews & Christians); and that during the time of this fitna over 18,000 Jews & Christians embraced Islaam as they began to study the matter as to whether the Qur'an is creation or not.